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INDIAN
EXPRESS
GROUP

Amid Ladakh, Covid crises, PM to address nation today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

AS THE country moves into the second phase of the Unlock, and the standoff with China in eastern Ladakh continues, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the nation at 4 pm on Tuesday.

His address will come two days after his monthly *Mann ki Baat* radio programme, during which he had reiterated the country's commitment to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and had asked citizens to not be negligent as the economy reopened.

The PM had paid tributes to the 20 soldiers who were killed in the clashes with Chinese troops on June 15 in Galwan valley. "Those who cast an evil eye on Indian soil in Ladakh have got a befitting response," he had said.

On Covid-19, the PM had asked people to be more vigilant.

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

THE SHRINKING OF
P V NARASIMHA RAO
BY VINAY SITAPATI
PAGE 10

Star TV chief
Uday Shankar
is guest at
e-Adda today



Uday Shankar



EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

AS COMPETITIVE sport gradually resumes around the world, the BCCI is considering holding the Indian Premier League (IPL) behind closed doors later this year. The possible return of live sport offers a ray of hope to lockdown-hit advertisers desperate to clamber onto the cricket bandwagon. And to BCCI's official broadcaster Star TV, it presents the unique challenge of telecasting matches from empty stadiums.

On Tuesday evening, *The Indian Express* will host an online Adda with Uday Shankar, president, The Walt Disney Company (Asia Pacific) and chairman, Star & Disney India. He will be in conversation with Anant Goenka, Executive Director, The Indian Express Group, and Sandeep Dwivedi, National Sports Editor. Shankar, who was born in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

GOVT CITES 'EMERGENT NATURE OF THREATS'

Virtual strike: India bans TikTok and 58 other apps with Chinese links

Decision comes amid tense border standoff with China and after state-owned telecom firms moved to keep out Chinese vendors

PRANAV MUKUL,
KARISHMA MEHROTRA
& AASHISH AARYAN
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

CITING THE "emergent nature of threats" from mobile applications, including popular ones of Chinese origin such as TikTok, ShareIt, UC Browser, Club Factory and CamScanner, the Centre Monday banned 59 apps based on information that they were

ACTIVE USERS IN INDIA

TikTok	120 mn
UC Browser	130 mn
ShareIt	400 mn
Helo	50 mn*

* monthly active users

Source: company figures 2018-2019

engaged in activities "prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity", defence, security and public order.

The move is seen as a retaliatory step amid the tense border standoff between India and China that led to 20 Indian Army personnel being killed on June 15. State-owned telecom companies have since moved to keep Chinese vendors out of their network upgradation tenders.

*The Ministry of Information
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



An IAF chopper in Ladakh on Monday. PTI

Corps Commanders to meet at Chushul today in new de-escalation bid

KRISHNA KAUSHIK
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

CORPS COMMANDERS of the Indian and Chinese armies are scheduled to meet Tuesday morning at the Chushul border point as part of efforts to de-escalate the situation on the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh.

This will be the third meeting between XIV Corps Commander

Lt General Harinder Singh and South Xinjiang Military Region Commander Major General Liu Lin. They will meet at the border point in Chushul — the June 6 and June 22 meetings were held at Moldo on the Chinese side.

At their last meeting, the Corps Commanders reached "mutual consensus to disengage" while discussing "friction areas" such as Galwan Valley, Hot
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Hawk Geelani quits as Hurriyat faction chief, slams rival bid for 'parallel structure'

Takes swipe at separatists in PoK: No power, want to be in Pak power corridor

BASHAARAT MASOOD
SRINAGAR, JUNE 29

IN A sudden move Monday, separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani resigned as chief of the hardline faction of the Hurriyat Conference, complaining that constituents of the amalgam failed to lead the people after abrogation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status, "overstepped the limits", and tried to "create a parallel structure".

He also took a swipe at the Hurriyat leadership in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, calling it "just a representative forum" with "no power to take any decision" and using its influence to "get close to power corridors" in Pakistan.

The ailing Geelani, who is 91, became life-time chief of the hardline faction, floated after the split of the Hurriyat Conference in 2003.

The other faction is led by
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Syed Ali Shah Geelani

EXPLAINED
Hurriyat's rapid loss of ground

EVEN BEFORE the abrogation of J&K's special status last August, separatist politics in the Valley had lost traction. With most leaders now under detention, those free, including Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, have preferred silence. Given this, Geelani's resignation doesn't mean much for separatist politics. It may lead to disintegration of the Hurriyat, and propel a younger, hardline leadership.

Pak tries to heat up LoC, 41 militants killed this month in stepped-up ops

SUSHANT SINGH
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

AS TENSIONS run high on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China, the other active border, the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan, has not seen any dip in intensity this year, raising the spectre of two active military fronts at the same time. Moreover, counter-militancy operations in Kashmir Valley continue at a tempo much higher than previous years.

There have been 382 ceasefire violations (CFVs) recorded on the LoC in May and 302 in June so far, rising sharply from 221 and 181 CFVs recorded dur-

CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS

2018	1,629
2019	3,168
2020	2,215*

MILITANTS KILLED

2018	254
2019	158
2020	119*

*Till June 25

ing these months last year. Meanwhile, security forces have been equally committed in fighting militancy — 41 militants killed in the month of June itself.
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



Judicial team probing torture 'harassed', HC orders takeover of TN police station

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, JUNE 29

THE MAGISTRATE appointed by the Madras High Court to probe the alleged custodial deaths of a father and son at Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu has written to the court saying officers of the police station concerned had destroyed evidence, did not cooperate in the investigation, and had tried



P Jeyaraj and J Bennix

to intimidate the judicial team. Kovilpatti Judicial Magistrate Bharathidasan has told the court

that the hostility had eventually forced them to stop the inquiry mid-way on Sunday night and leave the Sathankulam Police Station, where P Jeyaraj and son J Bennix were allegedly tortured, leading to their deaths on June 22.

Following the complaint, the High Court Monday directed the district collector to depute revenue officers to take control of the Sathankulam station. The
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

WORLD



7 KILLED IN ATTACK ON KARACHI STOCK EXCHANGE, INDIA GLABS PAK CHARGES

GLOBAL COVID-19 DEATHS TOP 5 LAKH
PAGE 13

Unlock 2: More flights, trains, but no schools and colleges till July 31

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

THE CENTRE on Monday issued guidelines for Unlock Phase II, beginning from July 1, with relaxations in night curfew, provision for more domestic flights and trains, and clearance for more than five people in a shop. However, schools, colleges and other educational institutions will remain closed till July 31, and Metro rail, multiplexes, gyms, swimming pools, bars and auditoriums will stay shut until further orders.

An order issued by Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla said that as per the instructions of the National Disaster Management Authority, more activities were being allowed in a calibrated manner in areas outside containment zones. Inside containment zones, lockdown measures have been extended till July 31.

ECONOMY

BHARAT BIOTECH'S COVID VACCINE FIRST IN INDIA TO GET NOD FOR HUMAN TRIALS P15

States are free to put more restrictions they deem necessary, though they can't seal borders. "States/UTs, based on their assessment of the situation, may prohibit certain activities outside the containment zones... However, there shall be no restriction on inter-state and intra-state movement of persons and goods including those for cross land-border trade under treaties with neighbouring countries. No separate permission/ approval/ e-permit will be required for such movements," the guidelines say.

More domestic flights and passenger trains will operate in
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

In Bhagalpur, tale of 4 health centres: Crowded rooms, staff and patients without masks, gloves

ASA DISTRICT UNLOCKS
AN EXPRESS SERIES

DIPANKAR GHOSE
BHAGALPUR, JUNE 29

OVER 50 people are crammed into one room of the Community Health Centre. An Additional Primary Health Centre is found locked in the middle of the day.

Two doctors manage a Primary Health Centre for 1.42 lakh people.

In Bihar's Bhagalpur, the fight against Covid captures the challenge faced by many small towns across India. The district, which is at the centre of the state's outbreak with 479 cases — second after Patna with 584 — has an aspirational town with ambitions of becoming a "Smart City".

But in its villages, health solutions are far from smart: crowded rooms, staff and patients without masks and gloves,



Sample collection in Shahkud, Bhagalpur. Dipankar Ghose

flawed testing protocols and patchy infrastructure.

At Dariyapur, where Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Ashwini Kumar Choubey hails from, the additional PHC was shut with residents complaining that they have to travel 15 km for basic treatment. Officials say it is open only to conduct immunisation.

The *Indian Express* visited four rural health centres in Bhagalpur in the span of a day. And this is what emerged:

Primary Health Centre SABOUR, 11.25 AM

Entry is monitored by a guard with a mask on his face, but no gloves. A few feet inside, two women are seated behind a small table with some papers and a thermal temperature scanner. One of them is nurse Rekha Kumari, who has a mask but no gloves, although there is a box of surgical gloves on the table.

As people approach, many without masks, Kumari checks
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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22 July | 1:30 PM लाइव / ऑनलाइन एवं ऑफलाइन कक्षाएँ

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We paid to take body for last rites: Kin of Hindu Rao staffer

Told to admit Covid patients, some nursing homes say close to shutting

Facing shortage of health workers, Govt tells court

Family says man murdered over water in Ranhola

घर-घर पहुंचे पाइप से जल

सबको मिले शुद्ध पेयजल

जल जीवन मिशन, उत्तर प्रदेश (हर-घर-जल) के अन्तर्गत प्रथम चरण में बुन्देलखण्ड की रु. 2,185 करोड़ की 12 ग्रामीण पाइप पेयजल परियोजनाओं के निर्माण कार्यों का शुभारंभ

योगी आदित्यनाथ
मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश

|

गजेन्द्र सिंह शेखावत
मंत्री, जल शक्ति, भारत सरकार

द्वारा

गरिमामयी उपस्थिति

डॉ. महेन्द्र सिंह
मंत्री, जल शक्ति एवं बाढ़ नियंत्रण
नमामि गंगे तथा ग्रामीण जलापूर्ति, उत्तर प्रदेश

स्वतंत्र देव सिंह
सदस्य, विधान परिषद

मनोहर लाल 'मन्नू कोरी'
राज्य मंत्री, श्रम एवं सेवायोजन
उत्तर प्रदेश

अनुराग शर्मा
सांसद, झाँसी

कुंवर पुष्पेन्द्र सिंह चन्देल
सांसद, हमीरपुर

भानु प्रताप सिंह वर्मा
सांसद, जालौन

राजीव सिंह 'पारीछा' | बिहारी लाल आर्य | जवाहर लाल राजपूत | रवि शर्मा | राकेश कुमार गोस्वामी | ब्रजभूषण राजपूत | रामरतन कुशवाहा | रमा निरंजन

विधायक, बबीना | विधायक, मऊरानीपुर | विधायक, गरौठा | विधायक, झाँसी नगर | विधायक, महोबा सदर | विधायक, चरखारी | विधायक, ललितपुर | सदस्य, विधान परिषद

दिनांक: 30 जून, 2020 | समय: मध्याह्न 12:00 बजे | स्थान: ग्राम मुराटा, तहसील मोठ, जनपद झाँसी

ग्रामीण पाइप पेयजल परियोजनाओं का विवरण

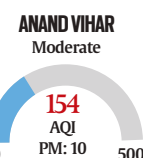
जनपद झाँसी	लाभान्वित राजस्व ग्रामों की संख्या	जनपद महोबा	लाभान्वित राजस्व ग्रामों की संख्या	जनपद ललितपुर	लाभान्वित राजस्व ग्रामों की संख्या
बुढपुरा ग्राम समूह पाइप पेयजल परियोजना	62	लहचुरा काशीपुरा ग्राम समूह पाइप पेयजल परियोजना	76	मसौरा सिंधवाहा ग्राम समूह पाइप पेयजल परियोजना	46
तिलहटा ग्राम समूह पाइप पेयजल परियोजना	31	शिवहर ग्राम समूह पाइप पेयजल परियोजना	63	लागौन ग्राम समूह पाइप पेयजल परियोजना	51
बचौली खुर्द ग्राम समूह पाइप पेयजल परियोजना	50	सलझिया नाथूपुरा ग्राम समूह पाइप पेयजल परियोजना	89	सैदपुर-कुम्हेरी एवं गोना नरहट ग्राम समूह पाइप पेयजल परियोजना	100
गुलारा ग्राम समूह पाइप पेयजल परियोजना	46				
कुरैचा ग्राम समूह पाइप पेयजल परियोजना	72				
इमलोटा ग्राम समूह पाइप पेयजल परियोजना	84				

उपरोक्त परियोजनाओं से जनपद- झाँसी, महोबा एवं ललितपुर के 770 राजस्व ग्रामों की लगभग 15 लाख आबादी लाभान्वित होगी।

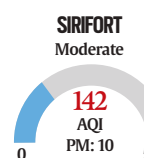
नमामि गंगे तथा ग्रामीण जलापूर्ति विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश



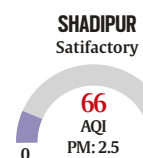
0-50 Good



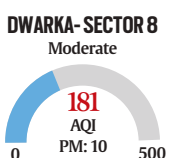
51-100 Satisfactory



101-200 Moderate



201-300 Poor



301-400 Very Poor

401-500 Severe

2,084 CASES, 57 DEATHS ON MONDAY

Positivity rate dips, more people leaving Covid hospitals than being admitted

MALLICA JOSHI
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

AS THE number of daily coronavirus tests conducted in the capital increases — from 6,070 on June 1 to 16,157 on Monday June 29 — the positivity rate has dipped.

According to data shared by the Delhi government, the city's average weekly positivity rate has gone from its highest point of 31% in the second week of June to 18% in the previous week, June 22 to 28.

The city has managed to ramp up testing over the past two weeks, especially after antigen testing kits, which give results within half an hour, were made available, particularly for containment zones.

While the RT PCR tests are the gold standard, results take longer.

Rapid antigen tests give a quicker result but those testing negative are not cleared conclusively.

A total of 2,084 new cases and 57 deaths were reported Monday. Delhi's total caseload is 85,161, of which 56,235 people have recovered and 26,246 are active cases.

So far, 2,680 people have died — the city's Covid mortality rate is 3.1%.

According to Delhi government data, the daily average new bed occupancy was 238 in the first week of June. While for the week ending June 28, an average of 27 more people were

discharged per day as compared to those who were admitted.

The first week of the month was the toughest for the city, as 1,664 more people were admitted to hospitals than were discharged.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had said Saturday that there was a shortage of beds seen in the city at the time, following which death toll had also risen.

At present, there are 13,410 Covid beds in Delhi, of which 7,389 are unoccupied.

The door-to-door screening in the city, to cover every household by July 6 to ascertain how many people have Covid-like symptoms, will meanwhile be delayed.

According to officials, a meeting was held in the Ministry of Home Affairs where the progress of screening and testing in containment zones was discussed.

After directions from the ministry, containment zones have been redrawn and their number went up from around 260 on Thursday to 435 on Monday.

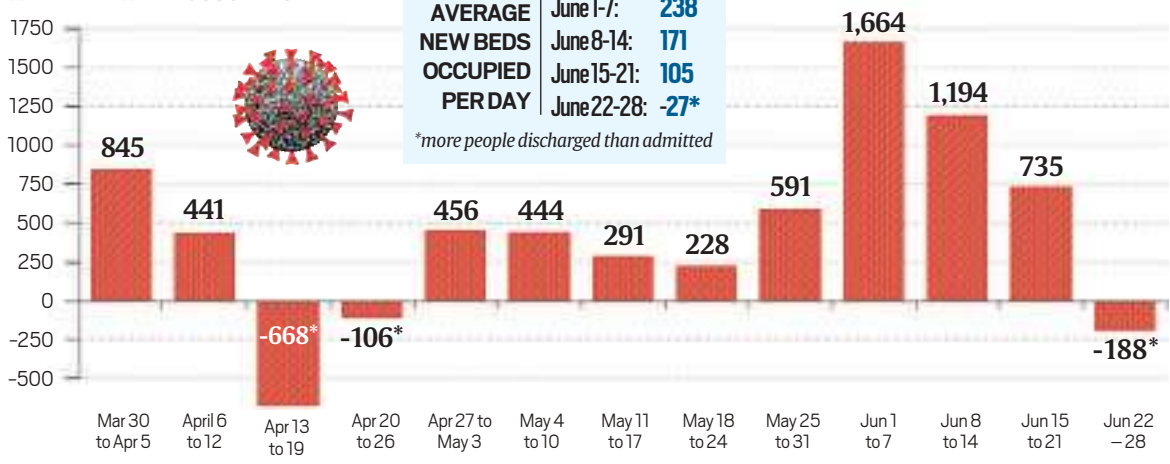
MHA officials said that new deadlines had been set for the survey based on the areas.

"Door to door survey will be done first in containment zones on priority basis by July 6. The date has been extended as the number of containment zones has increased to 435. This will be followed by a survey in the entire city," officials said.



At Reghar Pura in Karol Bagh, Monday. Praveen Khanna

WEEKLY NEW BED OCCUPANCY

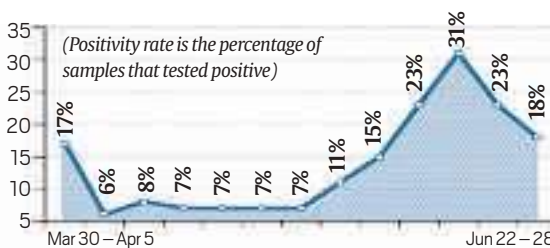


CORONAVIRUS IN THE CAPITAL

	TOTAL CASES	HOSPITAL BEDS		VENTILATORS	
		Total	Vacant		
	85,161	13,410	7,389	747	167
	Daily cases	Recoveries	Deaths	Tests	
June 28	2,889	3,306	65	20,080	
June 29	2,084	3,628	57	16,157	
Total	26,246*	56,235	2,680	5,14,573	

*Total active cases

WEEKLY AVG POSITIVITY RATE



Among those keen to donate plasma: Jain, who benefited from it

ASHNA BUTANI
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

AMONG THOSE who hope to donate once the plasma bank opens at ILBS in two days are Delhi's Health Minister and an MLA.

Hours after the CM's announcement, Health Minister Satyender Jain, who was in fact administered plasma therapy to help recover from Covid, tweeted, "Plasma therapy saved my life from Coronavirus and I pledged to donate my plasma as soon as medical protocols will allow."

AAP MLA Atishi, who too has recovered from Covid, told *The Indian Express*, "It would not cost me anything; it is just like donating blood and we all have donated blood at some point in our lives. But arranging plasma has appeared to be a challenge... Which is why we are setting up the bank. This should make the process simpler. We are hoping that this will change people's mindset."

Among those who have availed of the therapy is Dr Rajiv Sood from RML hospital, who was admitted to Max Saket in May-end. "The hospital was running a (plasma therapy) trial so there was no issue in arranging it. Plasma was infused in me twice, right at the start. I started to get better after that."

He was discharged after 13 days. "I think it is very helpful



Jain and Atishi have pledged to donate to the plasma bank



when given right at the start. Later on, the body starts to create its own antibodies so it would not be as helpful," he said.

As Delhi hospitals started offering the therapy, it sent families on hunt for plasma. Parminder Singh, whose son Paveet (31) was admitted to Max on May 9, recalled: "Doctors had told us to arrange plasma. But it wasn't easy. I spread the word and posted online many times. Then two people came forward to donate — but by that time, he had started recovering."

Delhi Government advisor Abhinandita Mathur and AAP media panelist Akshay Marathe also said they hope to donate once they are fit to. "The key is that people should not worry or be scared and come forward," said Mathur.

"Many people want to donate plasma but don't know how to. The plasma bank will provide a centralised platform for donors to come forward," Marathe said.

Capital to start plasma bank in two days, Chief Minister calls for donors

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

WITH DELHI'S Covid count reaching 85,161, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said Monday that his government will start a plasma bank within the next two days at the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS).

Describing the decision as "a first-of-its-kind initiative", Kejriwal appealed to those who have recovered from Covid-19 to donate plasma at the Institute. So far, 56,235 patients have been listed in Delhi under the "recovered/discharged/migrated" category.

According to senior officials, patients who have received convalescent plasma (CP), which is extracted from those who have recovered from Covid, showed improvement in respiratory rates and oxygen saturation levels.

Although the therapy is still in trial phase, Delhi was among the first to consider this line of treatment after clearance from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

"The oxygen saturation level in a healthy individual should be 95 per cent, and anything below that is considered dangerous. Secondly, ideal respiration rate should be 15 (breaths per minute), but due to corona, it may go up to 20, 25, and in some cases, cross 30," said Kejriwal.

Kejriwal, however, cautioned



The therapy is helpful for patients with moderate symptoms, mainly those whose condition is not serious yet: Kejriwal

"CP was administered to those whose respiratory rate had soared to 35.36 breaths per minute. Post administering plasma, the respiratory rate improved substantially with a drop of 8.22 in the first 48 hours and 14.92 in seven days... CP was administered on patients whose oxygen saturation level was 85 per cent and an improvement of 6.61 per cent was seen within 48 hours, and 9.92 per cent in seven days," according to details provided by the state government.

An official said the results "are better" when measured against those who received fresh frozen plasma (FFP) from donors who weren't infected by coronavirus. "The plasma of recovered patients carry antibodies that the body creates to ward off the virus," the official said.

Kejriwal, however, cautioned

that the therapy may not be effective on critical patients. "It is extremely difficult to save the patient who is in the last stage of infection, suffering from multi-organ failures and extreme comorbidities. But it is helpful for patients with moderate symptoms, mainly those whose condition is not serious yet," he said.

The Chief Minister said the decision to open the plasma bank, along the lines of a blood bank, has been taken in light of the high demand for plasma and low supply. "I am getting calls from people asking for plasma trials for their relatives and family members who are in hospitals. Around two months ago, Delhi was one of the first states to start plasma therapy trials. In the first phase, we conducted trials on 29 patients, and you may remember that the results were

very positive," he said.

Kejriwal said the state will start dedicated helplines for those willing to donate plasma: "Once we get a request, all assistance, including vehicles, will be extended. At Lok Nayak Hospital, over the last few days, 34 out of 35 people administered plasma therapy have recovered. At one private hospital, 46 out of 49 recovered."

According to officials, any "active" corona patient undergoing treatment in private and government hospitals will be able to avail plasma from the bank. "(But) the doctor has to recommend plasma therapy and it cannot be randomly sought by any patient. After a recommendation, the hospital or doctor has to inform ILBS," said Kejriwal.

The Chief Minister also pointed to "some misconceptions" among potential donors. "They feel that if they go to a Covid hospital to donate plasma, they might get infected again. This is not true... We have made arrangements in ILBS, which is not a corona hospital. The government will also pay for conveyance... the procedure takes around 30-45 minutes," he said.

Meanwhile, the National Blood Transfusion Council revised its guidelines Monday and said blood can be collected from Covid patients only 28 days after they have been discharged from hospital or completed home isolation.

Tihar confirms jail violence by 'foreign inmates'

PRITAMPAL SINGH
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

TIHAR JAIL authorities Monday admitted before the Delhi High Court that it is "true" an "untoward" incident happened inside the prison on June 16, after 15-20 foreign inmates created problems over a demand for grant of interim bail.

The averments were made in a status report filed before Justice C Hari Shankar, who had sought to know the stand of jail authorities on Pinjra Tod member Natasha Narwal's allegation that owing to "large-scale violence" in Tihar, inmates were being prohibited from getting in touch with family members via video conferencing. Narwal is in jail in connection with the anti-CAA Jafriabad sit-in protest.

"The foreign inmates... have been agitating for some time demanding that they should also be considered for...interim bail. Jail authorities have been consistently counselling and briefing them that their cases do not fall under the prescribed criteria for consideration for grant of bail..."

"...on June 16 morning, 15-20 foreign inmates created problems in the jail. They forced their way out of the ward and also damaged the locks of gates of wards No. 9 and Chakkur. Sensing trouble and having no other alternative, an alarm was sounded in the jail around 8.30 am, reinforcements were called and these inmates were physically controlled by minimum use of force..."

It further stated that "to curb the movement of inmates and their gathering, telephone facility of inmates was temporarily restricted for a few days with effect from June 16 to June 23, though it was allowed wherever found urgent". The court was informed that telephone facility has been restored since June 24.

Delhi government's Standing Counsel (Criminal) Rahul Mehra, during the hearing on June 24, had denied Narwal's counsel Adit S Pujari's contention, and had submitted that he has "instructions to the contrary from no less than Director General (Prisons)".

Pujari had mentioned the violence inside jail number 6 during the hearing of Narwal's plea on June 24, seeking daily access to her lawyer via video conferencing and to carry books and reading material in prison.

Mehra, assisted by advocate Chaitanya Gosain, filed the status report apprising that "13 books



Natasha Narwal

Tihar inmate killed in attack

New Delhi: A 27-year-old man was allegedly stabbed to death inside Tihar jail No 8 by another inmate Monday. DC (Delhi Prisons) Sandeep Goel said, "An inmate, Zakir (21), attacked Mehtab with a sharp metal object which he picked up from a broken window grill... Mehtab was stabbed five to six times and sustained injuries on his stomach and neck." He said the accused and the victim knew each other before their convictions. "The accused said the attack was the result of an old rivalry," said Goel. **ENS**

and 2 registers have been provided to her". "That with regard to the phone calls made by the petitioner (Narwal) herein, it is submitted that the petitioner availed facility of calling her family on telephone eight times so far," the court was told.

Narwal's counsel argued that as per Delhi Prison Rules, every interview between an undertrial prisoner and his legal adviser shall take place within sight, but out of hearing, of a prison official.

Pujari submitted that the petitioner needs more books and extended video conferencing time of 30 minutes, twice a week. The status report said that "in reference to submission made by the counsel for the petitioner, it is true that an untoward incident happened on June 16, 2020 at Central Jail No. 6, Tihar".

It also said the Delhi Prisons has started the facility of "video conferencing of prisoners with visiting panel advocates of the Delhi High Court Legal Services Committee recently, with effect from June 22, for legal aid to prisoners in respect to their cases in Delhi High Court".

Rs 1 cr for family of Lok Nayak doc, says Kejriwal

New Delhi: The Delhi government Monday announced an honorary compensation of Rs 1 crore for the family of Dr Asheem Gupta, the 58-year-old Lok Nayak Hospital doctor who succumbed to Covid-19 on Sunday.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal paid tributes to Dr Gupta: "We have lost a very valuable fighter. Delhi salutes his spirit and sacrifice." Dr Gupta was a senior consultant in department of Anaesthetics at Lok Nayak.

"Dr Gupta was known for going out of his way to serve his patients... I had a long conversation with his wife who is also a doctor... It is because of these doctors



Dr Asheem Gupta was posted in the ICU

that we are able to fight...against Corona," said Kejriwal.

Calling him as an inspiration for the people of the country, Kejriwal said the state will provide Dr Gupta's family an honorary compensation of Rs 1 crore. "...this compensation is a small tribute to him on behalf of the people of Delhi and the country," the CM added. **ENS**

BIDS INVITED FOR RETROFITTING WORK ON 74 COACHES

Metro to overhaul 10 oldest trains so passengers have uniform experience

SOURAV ROY BARMAN
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

THE DELHI Metro plans to completely overhaul 10 of its oldest trains, inducted way back in 2002, within the next year, as part of the corporation's efforts to bring uniformity in passenger experience across its old and new corridors.

As part of the initiative, the DMRC has invited bids for "retrofit" work of 74 coaches built in South Korea that make up the 10 train sets, which ply on the Red Line and Blue Lines of the 389-km network spanning Delhi-NCR.

Metro services are currently unavailable due to the coronavirus pandemic. While a detailed Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been chalked out for managing services, the Centre is yet to approve resumption of operations.

Refurbishment work will be carried out at the DMRC's Shastri Park, Najafgarh and Yamuna Bank depots, according to the tender document. There are over 280 such coaches, making up around 70 trains, which have been operational since 2002.

A DMRC official said Metro coaches have a lifespan of

around 30-35 years. But to ensure longevity, such mid-life interventions are required to resolve issues arising out of prolonged wear and tear.

Metro operations had started in Delhi in 2002 along the 8.3-km stretch between Tis Hazari and Shahdara stations on the Red Line. The Metro network now has 285 stations.

The Red Line connects Rithala with Ghaziabad's Shaheed Sthal while the Blue Line, which has two arms, connects Dwarka Sector 21 with Noida Electronic City and Vaishali.

The overhaul will cover floor-



Old coaches run especially on the Red and Blue lines. Archive

ing, space between two coaches, interiors, charging facilities, display panels, CCTVs and safety systems including smoke and fire detection. The estimated cost of the project is Rs 62.28 crore.

Trains plying on corridors built under Metro's Phase III expansion such as Pink and Magenta Lines are equipped with features such as stretched digital display panels, vibration and heat insulators, USB ports for charging mobiles and laptops among others.

The old coaches, especially on the Red Line and Blue Line, lack many of these features. After

the overhaul, these coaches will also have panels displaying real-time train movement between stations, CCTVs, along with arrangements of the video feed being available inside the train operators' cabin.

DMRC has also used the lockdown period to spruce up the air-conditioning system of over 2,200 coaches, inspect 1,100 escalators and 1,000 lifts. Metro services had come to a complete halt on March 22, the day 'janata curfew' was observed in the country.

Such an extensive cleaning exercise could not be under-

taken before as trains run up to 20 hours a day, from dawn till midnight. The cleaning exercise would result in a better air-conditioned environment in summers, a DMRC official added.

However, the lockdown has deprived Metro of revenues running into hundreds of crore.

The Indian Express had reported on June 3 that the DMRC earns an average of Rs 9 crore as revenue from ridership on usual weekdays. This excludes the DMRC's earnings from other sources such as advertisements, property development, feeder buses and consultancy.

After activists raise ecological concerns, Bander coal block struck off auction list

VIVEK DESHPANDE
NAGPUR, JUNE 29

THE UNION Ministry of Coal has decided to withdraw the Bander coal block located in the close vicinity of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) from the list of coal blocks up for auction. The ministry put out a list of 41 coal blocks for auction on June 18.

"We are withdrawing the Bander coal block from the list of coal blocks to be auctioned after closer scrutiny of the various aspects involved in the matter," Union Minister for Coal, Mines and Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi told *The Indian Express*.

The listing of the coal block was decided by protests from several wildlife activists as the 1,644-hectare block is believed to be in the eco-sensitive zone of TATR and any mining activity is likely to be detrimental to tiger conservation. The activists said it could obstruct a vital wildlife corridor connecting TATR to other tiger areas in Nagpur, Bhandara and Gondia districts. This, the activists had said, would further intensify the man-animal conflict in Chandrapur district.

Recently, Nagpur-based social worker Pramod Junghare moved the Nagpur bench of Bombay High Court, seeking its intervention in the matter. The High Court had issued notice to the coal ministry and sought a reply within eight weeks.

Earlier, the coal block was listed for auction in 1999 and 2009, but the proposals were shelved after similar opposition.

Former Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh, who had demarcated coal blocks into go and no-go areas in tandem with the coal ministry on the basis of ecological sensitivity, had written to Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar, seeking the removal of the Bander coal block from the auction list. Maharashtra Environment Minister Aaditya Thackeray had also written to Javadekar in this regard.

MADHYA PRADESH

Promise to Scindia delays Cabinet expansion

More than 40% ministries may go to ex-Cong MLAs; miffed CM holds parleys with party leadership

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

WITH NINE more ministry seats promised to the Jyotiraditya Scindia camp, the scheduled Cabinet expansion appears to be a tough task for BJP in Madhya Pradesh amid an internal tussle between Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and the party organisation.

Unable to get any of his loyalists accommodated in his Cabinet so far, Chouhan is learnt to be insisting that some of them be inducted. But the organisation leadership, which has been miffed with Chouhan for a range of reasons—the latest being his failure to get all MLAs to votes for BJP's official candidates in Rajya Sabha elections—is not budging, sources said.

Chouhan, in Delhi for the last



MP CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan and BJP leader Jyotiraditya Scindia, in Delhi Monday. Scindia handed over a cheque to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund for the state's Covid fight. ANI

two days, has had a series of meetings with the BJP leadership, including party president JPNadda and general secretary (organisation) B L Santosh. On Monday, he

met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah.

He is scheduled to leave for Bhopal on Tuesday morning.

While hectic parleys took place on Sunday and Monday, if all issues are sorted out overnight, the Cabinet expansion is technically expected on Tuesday. There seems to be remote possibility of the exercise taking place on Tuesday. Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel, who was to take additional charge of MP on Monday, is likely to reach Bhopal on Tuesday. MP Governor Lalji Tandon is undergoing treatment in Lucknow.

Sources said the Scindia camp—he had joined BJP along with 22 Congress MLAs, triggering the fall of the Kamal Nath government—has sought at least 11 of his MLAs to be made ministers. Two of his loyalists have already taken oath and Scindia wants the deputy CM's post for one of them, sources said.

This leaves very little room for the party to accommodate others, including senior leaders. While

the government is allowed 35 ministers, sources said both the party and Chouhan would keep some slots vacant. Sources said Chouhan's currently six-member council of ministers is expected to have 25 more members.

A party leader admitted that senior leaders have not been left with much choice. "The party will have to give what the Scindia camp asks for. The BJP could return to power in MP because of them." A party MP added. "Almost 40-45 per cent of ministries will have to go to them."

A senior BJP leader in Bhopal said the expansion is getting delayed because the whole concentration is on the Gwalior-Chambal belt, where most of the 24 seats bound for by-elections are located. The former Congress MLAs in Scindia camp belong to this region.

Border issue won't impact Nepal-India ties: Gyawali

SHIRISH B PRADHAN
KATHMANDU, JUNE 29

THE BORDER issue between India and Nepal should not impact other dynamics of bilateral ties, Nepal Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali said Monday, adding that he hoped the dispute would be resolved through diplomatic efforts.

Nepal this month completed the process of redrawing the country's political map through a constitutional amendment, incorporating three strategically important Indian areas.

India has termed as "untenable" the "artificial enlargement" of territorial claims by Nepal after its Parliament unanimously approved the new political map.

"We are confident that the dispute would be resolved through diplomatic efforts. No move capable of causing implication on Nepal-India multi-dimensional relations will be taken. The border issue should not undermine the

overall status of Nepal's ties with India," Gyawali told a meeting at the National Assembly.

He said the government was in constant touch with India to resolve the disputes. "We are in touch with India," Gyawali was quoted as saying by the *Kathmandu Post*.

"We are committed to resolving this issue through talks and I am hopeful that we will be able to resolve it," he added. "We will resolve the dispute but not by means of provocations and emotions."

India-Nepal ties came under strain after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated a 80-km-long strategically crucial road connecting the Lipulekh pass with Dharchula in Uttarakhand on May 8. Nepal reacted sharply to the inauguration of the road, claiming that it passed through Nepalese territory. India rejected the claim.

Responding to questions, Gyawali also said there was no border dispute between Nepal and China. PTI

50 per cent of Jal Jeevan target to be met by retrofitting old taps this year

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

RETROFITTING existing rural drinking water supply schemes, mainly those created under the previous UPA government term, will constitute more than 50 per cent of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) target for the current financial year. The Jal Jeevan Mission is an ambitious programme of the Narendra Modi government in its second term to provide functional tap connections to all households by 2024.

As many as 2.55 crore functional household tap connections (FHTC) of the targeted 4.85 crore across 25 states in 2020-21 will be provided by "retrofitting/augmentation" of 1.34 lakh existing village piped water supply schemes built earlier including under the UPA's National Rural Drinking Water Programme, shows analysis of data compiled from the minutes of annual action plan meetings of these 25 states. The 25 states account for 12.98 crore households, or 86.53 per cent of the 15 crore rural households that still did not have tap connections at the beginning of the current financial year. Data is not available for the remaining three states—Goa, Telangana and West Bengal. "Nal se Jal" for all rural households by 2024 was

a major poll plank of the Modi Government. Barely months after returning to power, Prime Minister Modi announced the Jal Jeevan Mission from the ramparts of Red Fort on August 15, 2019. The erstwhile National Rural Drinking Water Program (NRDWP), launched by the then UPA government in 2009, was restructured and subsumed in JJM.

While the JJM guidelines mention that the rural water supply infrastructure "created over the years" has to be "dovetailed, retrofitted and renovated" to provide 55-litre per capita per day (lpcd) tap connections, the Centre has nudged states to pick the "low hanging fruit" by "retrofitting" existing schemes to provide tap connections to remaining households in a village so as the village becomes "Har Ghar Jal Gaon" or 100 per cent FHTC village.

In fact, in a meeting to finalise Gujarat's annual action plan under JJM for 2020-21, Mission Director Bharat Lal conveyed this to the state government officers. "Giving an overview of the Mission, he emphasised to take full advantage of existing piped water supply systems in villages by taking up retrofitting/augmentation to provide Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs) to remaining households so as the village becomes 100 per cent 'Har Ghar Jal Gaon' i.e. 100 per cent FHTC village. This is the low hanging

fruit, which has been emphasised since August, 2019 and will yield tangible outcomes with least investment in very little time," said the minutes of Gujarat's annual action plan meeting.

During the discussions over annual action plans, Central government officials also highlighted that some states had planned less than their potential to provide FHTC through retrofitting. On Madhya Pradesh's plan for 2020-21, officials recorded in the minutes: "State doesn't appear to have explored the retrofitting/augmentation potential fully." Similarly, for Karnataka, they observed: "It seems that retrofitting/augmentation potential has not been fully explored."

"As per the analysis of existing PWS (piped water supply) schemes, there is a scope of providing 12.31 lakh FHTCs by retrofitting 8,025 completed schemes for last mile connectivity which already have service level of 55 lpcd or more," JJM officials noted in the minutes of Karnataka plan meeting.

They commended states which planned to provide a majority of connections through retrofitting. Appreciating Maharashtra's plan, JJM officials observed, "(The) State has made a good attempt to take advantage of retrofitting scope of existing schemes with 33.54 lakh (85.36 per cent) of its total plan of 39.29 lakh and the remaining from new schemes."

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सेक्टर-7, गीडा, गोरखपुर-273209, फ़ोन: 0551-2580010, फ़ैक्स: 0551-2580020

गीडा क्षेत्र में औद्योगिक भूखण्ड प्राप्त करने का सुनहरा अवसर

गीडा द्वारा औद्योगिक क्षेत्र सेक्टर-13 व 15 में औद्योगिक भूखण्ड योजना (2020) लाई गई है, जिसमें आवेदकों/उद्यमियों से आवेदन आमंत्रित किये जाते हैं। योजना में आवेदकों/उद्यमियों द्वारा आवेदन पूर्णतया ऑनलाइन किया जायेगा। आवेदन प्रपत्रों का शुल्क तथा पंजीकरण शुल्क भी ऑनलाइन ही जमा किया जायेगा।

योजना में आवेदन प्रारम्भ होने की तिथि
01-07-2020

योजना में ऑनलाइन आवेदन की अन्तिम तिथि
31-07-2020

योजना में प्रस्तावित भूखण्डों का न्यूनतम क्षेत्रफल 170.00 वर्गमीटर तथा अधिकतम 10,800.00 वर्गमीटर है। योजना में प्रस्तावित भूखण्डों के सम्बन्ध में वित्तीय वर्ष 2020-21 हेतु निम्नानुसार आवेदन दरें निर्धारित की गयी हैं:-

क्रमांक	भूखण्ड का क्षेत्रफल	दर (रु. प्रति वर्ग मीटर)
1.	0 वर्ग मीटर से 4000 वर्ग मीटर तक	₹ 6,800/-
2.	4001 वर्ग मीटर से 20000 वर्ग मीटर तक	₹ 6,700/-
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महत्वपूर्ण: आवेदन तिथि पर लागू आवेदन की दर पर ही आवेदन किया जायेगा।

गीडा द्वारा ऑनलाइन प्राप्त समस्त आवेदनों का परीक्षण, परीक्षण-समिति द्वारा किया जायेगा। परीक्षण समिति के द्वारा पात्र पाये गये आवेदकों के मध्य 500 वर्ग मीटर तक के औद्योगिक भूखण्ड लाटरी के माध्यम से आवंटित किया जायेगा। भूखण्डों की संख्या घट या बढ़ सकती है, जिसके सम्बन्ध में गीडा का निर्णय अंतिम एवं मान्य होगा। 500 वर्ग मीटर से अधिक क्षेत्रफल के भूखण्डों का आवंटन परीक्षण एवं साक्षात्कार समिति के संस्तुतियों के आधार पर किया जायेगा। गीडा के मुख्य कार्यपालक अधिकारी द्वारा आवंटन के पूर्व किसी नियम एवं आवंटन प्रक्रिया में परिवर्तन या पूरी आवंटन प्रक्रिया को निरस्त किया जा सकता है।

औद्योगिक भूखण्ड योजना (2020) में प्रस्तावित भूखण्डों की सूची, योजना के नियम एवं शर्तें तथा अन्य विवरण गीडा की वेबसाइट www.gidagkp.org पर देखी जा सकती है, एवं उक्त वेबसाइट पर ही ऑनलाइन आवेदन किया जा सकेगा।

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Don't take 'Unlock 1' irresponsibly as your alertness and awareness is the key to safeguarding your family as well as others from COVID-19.

WITH THE lifting of the lockdown 4.0, many restrictions were eased off as we entered Unlock 1 earlier this month. But does lifting of the lockdown mean that COVID-19 has become less severe? It doesn't seem so from the current state of affairs. What it means is we have to gradually build up our flailing economy, making sure that we're taking all the precautionary measures to stay safe while also ensuring the safety of others.

To strengthen the economy, be sure to 'Buy Indian'. This is the least you can do in these times to save our economy from tumbling down. This will also ensure a push for our local manufacturing industries which have been going through tumultuous times. Also, make sure that your immediate surroundings are regularly sanitised, disinfected and deep cleaned to get rid of the microscopic organisms like viruses, germs, bacteria etc. Maintaining a strict hygienic regimen on a daily basis will go a long way in ensuring a sound health in these times. While no vaccine is available yet for the novel coronavirus, cleaning hands with sanitiser containing at least 60 percent alcohol is considered an effective way to avoid the infection.

Further to curb fomite transmissions of infections, especially in offices and malls, it is essential to get them disinfected and sanitised using commercial disinfection and sanitisation services. The deep-cleaning, disinfection, and sanitisation services ensure that our offices, public places, vehicles and homes remain clean and tidy and free from germs and bacteria.

On the work front, it is true that a large part of our population is still remotely working. However, in a few months from now, post the complete lifting of the lockdown, car sanitisation will be a huge



cause for worry as people will consider taking this service to ensure their safety. Car sanitisation services can easily eliminate harmful germs, resting on interiors made of fabric, plastic and leather, to render them germ free for months to come. Further, car disinfection services aim to keep the car interiors germ free and can eliminate up to 99.9% microscopic organisms via fogging.

Moreover, to help the economy revive and industries thrive, many states have opened hotels and restaurants with proper procedures in place. At some places, malls have also started to open with all safety measures in place. However, the onus is upon us to maintain a strict vigil regarding hygiene to stay safe and sound. In this regard, work on increasing your immunity through various Yoga postures and Meditation. Promoting immunity in families is going to be a major challenge as a family comprises not just of healthy adults but also immunocompromised people with conditions like diabetes, heart diseases

etc. So, staying at the top of your health must be the priority now and forever.

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also many anti-allergic, anti-viral properties. These spices promote balance in any physiology. Concentrate on eating food that increases your immunity, as the stronger you're from within, the better it

is. Your alertness and awareness will not just save you and your family but thousands of others who can unknowingly come in contact with the COVID-19 infection.

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MAN & THE MACHINE

A DAY after pictures of Chief Justice of India S A Bobde with a Harley Davidson went viral online, sources close to his office said it was a demo bike sent by a dealer, and that the CJI only sat on the parked vehicle to get a feel of it. He did not take a ride on it, they said. A bike enthusiast, the CJI has long cherished owning one of those and had requested a dealer in Nagpur, where he lives, to show him a Harley, it is learnt. On Sunday evening, the CJI was at an event at the Raj Bhavan. Since the showroom was near the venue, the dealer sent a Harley Davidson — model CVO 2020. The CJI sat on it for a few minutes and checked out the features.

STAMP OF APPROVAL

THE CONGRESS'S ambivalence towards former Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao has got others staking claim to his legacy. First it was the TRS government in Telangana, which announced the year-long birth centenary celebrations. Now, it appears the BJP will do its bit after Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised the former PM in his Mann Ki Baat address on Sunday. The Department of Posts, under Ravi Shankar Prasad, seems to have taken cue and decided to issue a postage stamp to commemorate Rao's birth centenary year. Prasad contends that Rao didn't get the credit that he deserved because of the Congress's 'first family'.

RESHUFFLE BUZZ

THERE IS a buzz on reshuffle in the Congress once again. The grapevine has it that the party leadership is planning to induct some new faces into the AICC secretariat. While a couple of AICC secretaries have become ministers in the Maharashtra government, some have been elected to Parliament, thus creating room for new faces. The big question, however, is whether any of the present general secretaries will be replaced. The party is also in the final stages of appointing a new state Congress president in Maharashtra, as incumbent Balasaheb Thorat is now a minister in the state government.

ACTION TIME

THE MAN who was active to stitch up the majority behind the scene in Madhya Pradesh in March, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, was again in action on Monday. He held meetings with Madhya Pradesh leaders, including Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. Chouhan's Cabinet colleague Narottam Mishra, who holds the charge of two key ministries — Home and Health — also reached Krishna Bhawan to meet Tomar. The meetings comes at a time when there is a buzz of reshuffle in the state government in the coming days.

CPM questions EC nod to postal ballots for elderly

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

THE CPM on Monday questioned the Election Commission's (EC) decision to allow those aged 65 years and above to opt for postal ballot in elections, saying the move was disturbing since the poll body bypassed the established practice of consultation with political parties.

In a letter to Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora, CPM general secretary Sitaram Yechury said the Law Ministry, in response to a request from the EC, had earlier amended the Conduct of the Election Rules to allow people with disabilities and those 80 years of age or above to opt for postal ballot. And now, the Law

Ministry has notified fresh change to allow those aged 65 years and above the option of postal ballots in wake of the Covid-19 outbreak.

"Contrary to past practice, the current changes in the Rules, both in October, 2019 and that on June 19, 2020 have not been preceded by any consultation with the political parties whatsoever. From the media reports we are constrained to infer that the tearing hurry that the ECI displays is on account of the impending Bihar Assembly elections scheduled to be held in November, 2020," Yechury wrote.

He said, "A consensus among political parties and ECI is necessary for introducing new voting practices which will adversely affect the verifiability of a large number of voters, thus, transparency and integrity of the process..."

Uttarakhand okays forest land transfer for roads to China border

Proposal to make ITBP movement smoother; awaits National Wildlife Board approval

LALMANI VERMA
LUCKNOW, JUNE 29

AMID THE row between India and China along the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh, the Uttarakhand State Wildlife Advisory Board on Monday gave its go-ahead to three proposals on transfer of forest land in Gangotri National Park for development of roads to make movement of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) personnel near China border.

Gangotri National Park is a protected area.

Uttarakhand's Principal Secretary (Forests) Anand Bardhan said proposals regarding land transfer for these roads will be sent to the National Wildlife Board next.

Officials said land will be transferred for road construction after clearance from the national Board.

Under these proposals, a total of 73.36 hectares of forest land at three different sites of Gangotri National Park will be required to be transferred for construction of separate roads, totalling 35.66 km in length.

The first of these proposed stretches is an 11.85-km road planned between Sumla and Thangla-1, a 17.60-km road from Mandi to Sangchokla road, and a third 6.21-km stretch proposed road from Tripadi to Rangmachgaad.

All these are small hamlets in the region, near the international border with China.

A release from the state government, issued on Monday, stated, "In the meeting, the Uttarakhand State Wildlife Advisory Board has agreed to send proposals to the National Wildlife Board for permission for construction of various routes in Gangotri National Park. These

routes are very important for national security."

The area where land has to be transferred for road development is in Uttarkashi district.

An agency of the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) will develop the roads, it was informed.

A senior official from the state Forest Department said, "At present, ITBP and Army personnel have to walk 15 to 25 km from the starting points of these proposed road stretches to reach near the border. Once these roads are developed, distance to the border will be reduced..."

The proposal document says that road has to be developed for the ITBP personnel. A forest official said Army personals also move along the same route in that area.

Elephant count up

In the meeting, the Forest

Department also informed that an elephant census, taken up between June 6 and 8, has found that there are in all 2,026 elephants in Uttarakhand.

Similar counts in 2012 had reported 1,559 elephants; 1,488 animals were found in 2015 census, and 1,839 in 2017. Since 2017, the number of elephants has increased by 10.17 percent, according to the department.

As per 2020 census, there are 304 adult male (282 tuskers and 22 Makhna) and 771 adult female elephants in Uttarakhand. The population of sub-adult (5 to 15 years) was found at 447 – 181 male and 266 female animals. The population of juveniles elephants (1 to 05 years) is 285 and suckling calves (below one year) 172.

Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat tweeted said that sex ratio of elephants in Uttarakhand is better than other states.

Deal inked for first India-Bhutan joint venture hydroelectric project

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

A CONCESSION agreement for the first India-Bhutan joint venture hydroelectric project was signed on Monday, paving the way for commencement of its construction and other related works.

The concession agreement for the 600 MW Kholongchu project between the Bhutanese government and Kholongchu Hydro Energy Limited was signed in the virtual presence of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Bhutanese counterpart Tandri Dorji, a Ministry of External Affairs



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar attends the signing ceremony via video conference in New Delhi on Monday. *ANI*

(MEA) statement said.

"The signing of the concession agreement will lead to commencement of construction and

other works of this first joint venture hydroelectric project between India and Bhutan. The project is expected to be com-

pleted in the second half of 2025," it said.

The 600 MW run-of-the-river project is located on the lower course of the Kholongchu river in eastern Bhutan's Trashiyangtse district.

This is the first joint venture project to be implemented in Bhutan, Jaishankar said, congratulating both partners — Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam Limited (SJVN) and Druk Green Power Corporation (DGPC) — for it.

Describing the agreement as a "milestone", he said the commencement of construction activities of the project will create economic and employment opportunities in Bhutan in this critical time.

'Cong culture to loot treasure, Modi's plan to spend it on poor'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

SLAMMING CONGRESS president Sonia Gandhi for targeting the government over fuel prices, Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said the Narendra Modi government has transferred more than Rs 65,000 crore to 42 crore people in the last three months, and that prices in India will stabilise once the international market prices start stabilising.

"Unlike @INCIndia's legacy of transferring money into the accounts of middlemen, 'National Daamad, 'The Family' and Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, Modi's DBT is about putting money in the hands of the poor, farmers, migrant workforce and women," Pradhan tweeted.

"Your culture is to loot the treasure, Modi's plan is to spend it on the poor, needy and middle class..." Pradhan said.

RELATED REPORT
PAGE 15

Cong slams govt over 'unjust, insensitive' fuel price hike

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

THE CONGRESS on Monday slammed the central government over the continuous increase in prices of petrol and diesel, with party chief Sonia Gandhi saying the government was indulging in extortion. She demanded immediate rollback of the hike in fuel prices and excise duty to take them back to pre-lockdown levels.

The Congress held protests across the country against the fuel price hike and increase in excise duty and waged a campaign on social media.

Congress's social media department head Rohan Gupta said the "speak up against fuel hike" social media campaign elicited good response, with more than 2.5 lakh tweets and a reach of more than 16 crore people.

Sonia, in a video message, said the government has since the imposition of the nationwide lockdown on March 25 increased the prices of petrol and diesel 22 times. While the price



Rajasthan Deputy CM Sachin Pilot with Congress leaders at a protest in Jaipur against the fuel price hike. *Rohit Jain Paras*

of diesel has gone up Rs 11 per litre, petrol has increased by Rs 9.12 per litre, she said. She said the Modi government is planning to collect lakhs of crores by raising excise duty.

"And all is happening at a time when international crude oil prices are continuously falling," she said, adding it is the duty of the government to support citizens in difficult times and not take advantage of their plight and profiteer.

Since 2014, Sonia said, the

government has instead of transferring the benefit of fall in international crude prices increased excise duty on fuel 12 times, helping it collect additional revenue of nearly Rs 18 lakh crore.

"This is yet another example of filling the coffers with the hard-earned money of the people," she said, adding it is the duty of the government to support citizens in difficult times and not take advantage of their plight and profiteer.

Tibet govt-in-exile urges UNHRC session on 'rights abuse' by China

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

PRESIDENT OF Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) Lobsang Sangay has "strongly urged" the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and its member-countries to hold a special session to evaluate "human rights violations" being carried out by China.

This comes days after 50 UN independent experts called on the UNHRC to "act with a sense of urgency" to protect fundamental freedoms in regions under China, including Tibet, Hong Kong, and Xinjiang.

In a statement, Sangay said the CTA and Tibetans — both in and outside Tibet — would like to thank the UN experts for their timely intervention and welcome their call for urgent decisive measures against the Chinese government.

In the last six decades and more, Tibetans within Tibet are suffering under the "authoritarian rule" of Beijing, he said.

Sangay said the Chinese government has stripped Tibetans of their basic human rights guaranteed under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, annihilating the distinct identity of Tibetans and denying them their

inherent dignity of being human. The tortures, enforced disappearances, and destruction of monasteries carried out by Beijing against Tibetans are acts of crimes against humanity and do not fall short of being categorized as "cultural genocide", he said.

The persecution and suppression through hi-tech surveillance by China have forced 154 Tibetans from different walks of life in Tibet to self-immolate as a mark of peaceful protest against the Chinese authorities since 2009, he said.

Sangay said: "The unchecked, systemic, and egregious violations by the government of China with impunity in Tibet has emboldened it to carry out similar violations in Xinjiang and now Hong Kong. It is time to hold China accountable, otherwise it will have an adverse global impact as evidenced by the Wuhan-originated Covid-19 pandemic."

"As rightly noted by the UN experts, the violations by China are threatening world peace and security, leading to human rights emergencies across the globe."

The CTA and Tibetans support the call of the UN experts on the UNHRC to take urgent measures against Chinese human rights violations, he said.

Govt expands its SC team, led again by Venugopal as AG, Mehta as SG

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, AHMEDABAD, JUNE 29

THE CENTRE on Monday notified the reappointment of Senior Advocate K K Venugopal as Attorney General for India for a period of one more year with effect from July 1. Senior Advocate Tushar Mehta continues as Solicitor General of India for another three years or till further orders, whichever is earlier.

Additional Solicitor Generals Vikramjit Banerjee, Aman Lekhi, Madhavi Goradia Divan, K M Natraj and Sanjay Jain continue in their posts, as per the orders issued by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet regarding the government's law officers in the Supreme Court.

Besides, the government gets six more ASGs in the Supreme Court for three years — Senior Advocates Balbir Singh, Suryaprakash V Raju, Rupinder Singh Suri, M Venkataraman, Jayant K Sud and Aishwarya Bhati. Raju, currently practising in the Gujarat High Court, has handled some of the most high-profile cases in the state. He represented Union Home Minister Amit Shah in the Sohrabuddin

encounter case, in which Shah was discharged, as well as several accused officers in other encounter cases in the state, including that of Ishrat Jahan and Tulsiram Prajapati.

His other clients have included rape-convict Asaram Bapu, top officials of Calorex accused of forgery in leasing out land to self-styled godman Nithyanand, and Ahmedabad District Cooperative Bank, which accused Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of defamation.

Appointments were also made for ASGs to several high courts — Senior Advocate Yezdezard Jehangir Dastoor for the Calcutta High Court, Senior Advocate Chetan Sharma for Delhi, Senior Advocate R Sankarnarayanan for Madras, Senior Advocate Krishna Nandan Singh for Patna and Advocate Devang Girish Vyas for the Gujarat High Court.

The only one who is not a Senior Advocate among the new ASGs, Vyas is currently Assistant Solicitor General at the Gujarat High Court.

Anil C Singh and Satya Pal Jain continue as ASGs of the Bombay High Court and Punjab and Haryana High Court, respectively, for another three years.

MP BJP leader may face action for outburst against Vijayvargiya

MILIND GHATAWAI
BHOPAL, JUNE 29

SENIOR BJP leader Bhawan Singh Shekhawat is in trouble as the party has indicated that it could initiate action against him, days after he launched a broadside against the party's national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya.

The former MLA and chairman of Madhya Pradesh State Cooperative Bank had alleged that Vijayvargiya funded nearly a dozen BJP rebels in the 2018 Assembly elections which ensured that Shivraj Singh Chouhan could not return to power again.

Shekhawat, who lost from Badnawar seat in Dhar district, alleged that Vijayvargiya had funded Rajesh Agrawal, who contested as an Independent and got more than 30,000 votes. The BJP had expelled Agrawal after his rebellion but admitted him to the party fold a few days ago.

While Vijayvargiya has chosen not to respond, state party president V D Sharma said Shekhawat has been called to Bhopal. Sharma said the decision to bring back Agrawal was taken by the party considering the by-polls. He said Vijayvargiya had been given the responsibility of five seats in Malwa region and other leaders of the remaining 19 seats where by-elections are due.

Shekhawat stuck to his allegations, saying responsibility does not mean that one can field rebels against official nominees "who are your adversaries, fund them and ensure they cut into party votes".

When asked about the party's summons to him, Shekhawat said he has sought time to meet Chouhan.

"I will put my grievances across. I am sure the party will understand and take remedial measures," he said, adding that he was confident the BJP will not crack the whip against him.

IN A FIRST SINCE COVID-19 OUTBREAK, COMMITTEE ON WELFARE OF OBCs HOLDS PHYSICAL MEETING

Parliament begins return to normalcy, hosts House panel meet

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

THE MONSOON Session of Parliament may take a while to begin as the government has not yet decided on a date, but functions of Parliament started returning to normalcy on Monday with a committee holding a physical meeting.

The Committee on Welfare of Other Backward Classes met and made important recommendations to various ministries, its chairman and BJP MP Ganesh Singh told *The Indian Express*. The panel, which has 26 members, met with 11 of its members present in the meeting held at Parliament Annexe.

This was the first physical meeting of a Parliamentary committee since the Covid-19 outbreak hit the country and the functions of Parliament. According to the Lok Sabha website, the next meeting of a Parliamentary committee is scheduled for July 10 — the Public Accounts Committee chaired by Congress MP Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury is to meet that day. The website says the agenda of the PAC meeting would be "Consideration of Memorandum No.1 regarding selection of subjects for examination during the year 2020-21".

"This shows Parliamentary functions are crawling back to normalcy," said an official.

On Monday, the committee



Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla are still reviewing options for holding the Monsoon session.



on OBC welfare had called Health Secretary Preeti Sudan and four other witnesses to appear before it. "The panel has taken some important recommendations and action from the government will come soon," Singh said.

According to the agenda, the committee was to take evidence from health ministry officials on "measures undertaken to secure representation of OBCs in employment and for their welfare in AIIMS and other central government medical institutions".

7 THE OUTBREAK

Apex court asks Centre to clarify on visa cancellation of foreign Tablighi members

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

THE SUPREME Court on Monday asked the Centre to clarify whether visas of hundreds of foreign nationals associated with the Tablighi Jamat had been cancelled, and if so whether orders were issued in each case.

"If visas of these foreigners are cancelled, why are they still in India?...If not cancelled, we will reject these petitions," a bench of Justices A M Khanwilkar, Dinesh Maheshwari and Sanjeev Khanna told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta.

The bench asked Mehta to inform it whether there was only a general direction, or individual orders were issued in each case, intimating about blacklisting and cancellation of visa.

The court was hearing a petition by 34 of these foreign nationals challenging an announcement by the Ministry of Home Affairs about their blacklisting.

Senior advocate Salman Khurshid, appearing for the petitioners, said visas which are granted every year have sud-

denly stopped.

The court, however, pointed out that there was no order before it and it only had an official press release.

Senior advocate C U Singh, also appearing for the petitioners, said no notice nor any order was served on any individual. He submitted that there was no order stating that the visas will be cancelled or the foreign nationals blacklisted — what happened was their passports were simply impounded, he added.

Advocate Rajat Nair, also appearing for the Centre, said the government's side had not been served a copy of the petition yet.

The court said, "We need to see if case by case orders needs to be taken by the state government." It added that visa cancellation needs to be done on a case to case basis and that the orders in this regard should be produced.

Singh said the Centre must consider the plea on humanitarian grounds also, and that these Tablighi members should be sent back to their country if there was indeed a violation of visa conditions, as their country wants them back.

Karnataka works on app to help patients find beds as cases rise in Bengaluru

JOHNSONT A
BENGALURU, JUNE 29

AT A time when Bengaluru faces a bed crunch due to a spike in Covid-19 cases, the software development team of Karnataka Covid-19 War Room has been entrusted with developing an app that helps patients find a hospital bed as easily as they book a cab.

"We want to create an app that will work like Ola and Uber apps for access to hospital beds. Only those who test positive for Covid-19 will be able to book a bed," said Munish Moudgil, an IAS officer who heads the War Room.

The app will have backend verifications on an ICMR database of persons who test positive for Covid-19 each day and bed allocations will happen only after these checks, Moudgil said.

A prototype of the app is under development and officials on Friday held discussions with IAS officer Tushar Girinath, who has been put in charge of streamlining bed availability in Bengaluru, to understand requirements for the app. "At present, data on hospital bed availability is on a spreadsheet. An app is proposed, but it could take a few days. The spreadsheet data will be put in public domain soon," Girinath said.

According to epidemiologist and ICMR Covid-19 research group member Dr Giridhar R Babu, technology must be used to address the problem of finding beds for Covid-19 patients.

"Realtime allocation of beds and ICUs using technology can

help save lives. Self-assessment, finding hospitals for testing/hospitalisation and support should be integrated on the app or telephone," he stated.

The software development team has so far developed six apps for different functions, including contact tracing, quarantine watch, tracking arrivals and critical patients.

Bengaluru currently has 2,692 active Covid-19 cases. While only 1,514 beds are available in the government health set-up, private hospitals have not opened up beds for non-insurance patients yet, say city health officials. As per official data, only 418 patients have been admitted to private hospitals since June 1, despite availability of 1,500 beds on paper. The city reported the highest single-day spike of 783 cases on Sunday.

"The government healthcare system is getting overwhelmed. Although private hospitals have allotted ICU beds on paper for Covid-19 care, they are not allotting them to patients referred by the state," a health official said.

On June 23, the Karnataka government issued an order under the National Disaster Management Act for taking over 50 per cent of beds at all private hospitals. On Saturday, the state government issued a warning to private hospitals not releasing beds for Covid-19 patients. "Non compliance to the order will attract punishment under relevant sections..." states the warning signed by Chief Secretary TM Vijay Bhaskar.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com



Health workers conduct a door-to-door survey in a slum in Mumbai on Monday. Amit Chakravarty

Maharashtra extends lockdown till July 31, more curbs in place

SANDEEP ASHAR
MUMBAI, JUNE 29

CONCERNED OVER a spike in Covid-19 cases, Maharashtra government on Monday deferred further reopening of the state economy while extending the lockdown in the state till July 31. Norms governing movement of public for shopping, outdoor physical exercise and non-essential travel have been issued to ensure fewer people step out of home.

According to the latest guidelines issued on Monday, shopping, outdoor exercise and movement for all other non-essential activities has to be limited to neighbourhood areas. No such curbs were announced when such activities were first permitted from June 5 as part of the 'Mission Begin Again' initiative.

"Maharashtra is threatened with the spread of Covid-19 virus and therefore to take certain emergency measures to prevent and contain the spread of the virus, it is expedient to extend the lockdown in the entire state till July 31, 2020," said the notification, signed by Chief Secretary Ajoy Mehta, for the revised

guidelines issued on Monday.

"Movement of persons for non-essential activities like shopping and outdoor exercises shall be restricted within the neighbourhood limit, with all the necessary prescribed mandatory precautions of wearing masks, social distancing and personal hygiene. Unrestricted movement will be permitted only for attending places of work that are allowed to remain open and bonafide humanitarian requirements including medical reason," it added.

Non-essential markets, market areas and shops can stay open only until 5 pm in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) and other hotspots. Malls and market complexes will remain shut.

A proposal to increase staff in private offices from 10 per cent to 25 per cent has been deferred. So has the unlocking of export-oriented industrial units and also those located in areas inside the special economic zones and industrial estates within the municipal corporation areas of MMR.

"Further easing under Mission Begin Again will be notified in due course," stated the

order. However, it clarified that all economic activities permitted previously will continue to be allowed.

The order mentioned that "staggering of work/business hours will be followed in offices, workplaces, shops, markets, industrial and commercial establishments".

Last week, in an interview to *The Indian Express*, Mehta had said that the only way to manage a city like Mumbai in a post Covid-19 situation was by getting offices and shops in Mumbai to stagger work hours, summon employees in shifts and encourage work from home. While SOPs are being formulated in this regard, sources said that containing the spread of the new cases is the government's top priority.

Since June 5, when the first phase of the Unlock began, a spike of 92,090 infections has been reported across the state, with Mumbai's satellite cities and a few other tier-2 cities accounting for bulk of the increased case load. A central team had on Sunday flagged the surge in cases in Thane, Solapur and Aurangabad districts in particular, recommending tightening of norms.

Thane: More restrictions likely from July 2

Mumbai: Authorities are planning to impose several restrictions in Thane city for a 10-day period from July 2.

More details on the restrictions, which would be effective in areas that come under the Thane Municipal Corporation, will be clarified by the civic body on Tuesday.

On June 3, when lockdown rules were eased in the state, TMC had reported 4,019 cases and 84 deaths. Since then, the number of patients has increased by 139 per cent to 9,644 while fatalities have increased by 275 per cent to 315.

TMC Deputy Commissioner Sandeep Malvi said a decision on the restrictions will be taken on Tuesday. **ENS**



LONG WAIT: Commuters faced delays in Kolkata on Monday with most private buses continuing to stay off the road as the West Bengal government refused a fare hike. The government is now banking on tram and ferry services and also planning to bring in state-run buses from other districts. Shashi Ghosh

Bengal to form Covid Warrior Club with recovered patients

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, JUNE 29

CHIEF MINISTER Mamata Banerjee on Monday said that the state government will form a 'Covid Warrior Club', comprising people who have recovered from the coronavirus, to perform voluntary service at hospitals and help contain the pandemic.

Addressing a press conference, Banerjee said, "We are starting a Covid Warrior Club. It will have recovered patients. We are starting with Behrampur, where we have found 60 individuals who have been cured of Covid. They will do voluntary service and make people aware of the fact that Covid can be cured. They will be given a



Fancy Bazar area wears a deserted look, in Guwahati. PTI

Guwahati lockdown begins, Himanta says must ensure its success

ABHISHEK SAHA
GUWAHATI, JUNE 29

A 14-DAY lockdown began in Guwahati on Monday with even grocery stores shut amid a constant surge in Covid cases in Assam. The lockdown prompted the Meghalaya government to impose curbs in areas bordering Guwahati.

Assam Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma told reporters, "We cannot keep imposing complete lockdowns again and again. We have to ensure that this lockdown is successful in checking the spread of Covid in Guwahati."

"The situation might get complicated in the next few days and therefore, we have to be very careful. We have not issued passes and have not allowed even grocery stores to open, so that the lockdown is successful," Sarma said, adding the govern-

ment may consider allowing grocery stores and fruit and vegetable vendors after the first seven days of the lockdown.

Guwahati reported 130 cases on Sunday. The lockdown was announced on Friday with long queues outside shops over the last two days.

The Assam government has established facilities for swab collections in 31 Covid Care Centres and 12 hospitals across Guwahati. Sarma has urged people to come forward and get themselves tested if they observe any symptoms.

Meanwhile, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma tweeted, "Government has decided that the locations in Meghalaya bordering Guwahati i.e. Byrnihat, Jorabat till Khanapara will be under #lockdown due to the surge in #Covid_19 cases in #Assam. Inter-state movement continues to be restricted. DC will issue necessary orders accordingly."

No suggestion to extend TN lockdown: panel member

PRESSTrust OF INDIA
CHENNAI, JUNE 29

THE EXPERT committee set up to advise the Tamil Nadu government on tackling Covid has favoured restrictions based on the scenario in specific regions and has not recommended extension of the lockdown in force in the state till Tuesday, one of its members said.

It also wanted the "successful initiative" of holding fever camps in the city to be extended to other parts of the state as well. Dr Prabhdheep Kaur of the National Institute of Epidemiology-ICMR said after taking part in a meeting chaired by CM K Palaniswami here. "Our committee did not recommend lockdown. It is called a blunt instrument. Though not the best solution, it is needed sometimes," she said.



Mamata Banerjee at State Secretariat on Monday. Express

stipend and the government will arrange for their food and accommodation."

Soon there will be such clubs across the state, she said. The members will voluntarily make people aware of the treatment and may also help doctors and nurses, for which they will get a stipend.

Central team expresses concern over containment measures in Hyderabad

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, JUNE 29

A CENTRAL team led by Luv Agarwal, Joint Secretary, Union Ministry of Health and Welfare, on Monday visited areas under the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) as part of its survey to ascertain the causes behind the massive spike in Covid-19 cases reported in the city over the last week.

During discussions with health department officials, the central team is learnt to have expressed concerns over containment measures.

The team questioned how contact-tracing can be carried out when shared autorickshaws were plying freely and pointed out that too many people were moving

around freely without masks or social distancing norms.

According to officials, the team interacted with health workers in at least two containment zones — Himayathnagar and Dommalguda — and visited the homes of those who had recovered from Covid-19 in these areas. The team also spoke to residents about the restrictions they are facing.

The Central team also visited the newly-constructed Telangana Institute of Medical Sciences in the Gachibowli area — being touted as a 1,000 bed dedicated Covid care facility — to check on supplies.

Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar said the state was conducting tests as per ICMR guidelines. "We are testing where it is required and necessary," he said.

STUCK FOR 3 MONTHS DUE TO LOCKDOWN, 32-YR-OLD WILL LEAVE HIS 'SECOND HOME' ON JULY 2

Kerala village, its love for football look after Rwanda man

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JUNE 29

FOR NEARLY three months, Kadakam, a nondescript village in Kerala's Kasaragod district, took care of a 32-year-old Rwandan as he got stuck there during the nationwide lockdown after going there for a friend's wedding. On July 2, as Ukizemwabo Bevanue flies out — thanks again to local residents who collected money for his ticket — they plan to hand him some more money. To get over the isolation period upon landing back home.

All this thanks to the Beautiful Game.

Like elsewhere in Kerala, lo-

cals in Kadakam are "crazy about the game", as well as the enthusiasm brought by African players to the dusty seven-a-side football grounds. And Bevanue, a part-time footballer, had enthralled them with his craft almost a decade ago.

For the last three months, Kadakam took care of not just "Benny" — as locals fondly called him, finding his second name a touch difficult to pronounce — but also his family of wife and two children back in Rwanda.

Bevanue reached India in February on a student visa and joined an MBA course at an institute in Trichy. Soon came an invitation for the wedding of Renjith K C, a native of Kadakam and Bevanue's friend since the time they were graduate stu-

dents at Annamalai University in Tamil Nadu.

Seven-a-side football tournaments being popular in north Kerala's villages, African players — many of them studying in the country — are quite sought after. "In 2010-11, a local football club, Kadakam Friends Combine, was looking for African players in local matches. I took up the idea of bringing Bevanue, who had been a local player in his college days. That season, the club fielded him in regional sevens' tournaments, introducing him to Kerala grounds," said Ranjith, an agricultural officer with a rural bank.

Renjith's wedding, slated for the last week of March, stands postponed.

Bevanue, who reached Kasaragod weeks before the D-



Ukizemwabo Bevanue reached India in February on a student visa

day, got stuck in the lockdown. While his plans to make some money by playing some local seven-a-side games lay shattered, the club came to his rescue.

Kadakam Friends Combine secretary Sudheesh Kumar said, "We are crazy about football. When we learned about Bevanue's plight, the club immediately found a vacant house for his stay. We, the members and local residents, supplied food and essentials for cooking."

To alleviate his concern for family back in Rwanda, "we raised money several times to help him transfer a sum", Kumar said.

Bevanue, he said, had only Rs 1,200 when he reached Kasaragod.

Bevanue said, "But for the in-

tervention of the local people and the club, I would have ended in misery. I know many of them did not have work during the lockdown, yet they contributed to help me and my family. I am sad that I cannot give back anything for this love and care of the people of Kerala."

Kumar said they managed to collect Rs 1 lakh for his return flight only on Monday. "Our club members are ordinary workers, many of them daily wagers. Yet, they were not hesitant to contribute to help Bevanue return. Today, we paid Rs 75,000 for his airfare."

Renjith said the locals would give a sum before he leaves. After all, "he has to stay alone (in quarantine) for some time on reaching home".

Give opt-out facility to all candidates who can't make it to CA exam: SC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

THE SUPREME Court on Monday asked the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) to extend its 'opt-out' facility for candidates who are unable to attend the July 29-August 16 Chartered Accountancy (CA) exams due to the pandemic to all candidates who cannot make it, irrespective of whether they opted to remain out or not.

A bench of Justice A M Khanwilkar, Dinesh Maheshwari and Sanjiv Khanna observed that the ICAI should be flexible in conducting exams given the prevailing situation.

"Suppose a candidate has not chosen the opt-out option but suddenly comes under a containment zone. What will you do? You should treat candidates who do not appear as opt-out cases," the bench said.

The bench also advised ICAI to keep open the option for change

in examination until the last week and not to freeze it, as the situation is constantly evolving.

Counsel for the petitioner, advocate Alakh Alok Srivastava, urged the court to direct that there should be one centre per district.

But the bench pointed out that the suggestion is being disputed by ICAI. If there is low requirement, why should there be a centre, the court added.

The ICAI's counsel submitted that there are 567 test centres identified and sanitised properly, and the same cannot be changed now. He said that as per standard operating procedure, the authorities will shift the examination centre if the area is declared a containment zone. He pointed out that out of around 3.46 lakh registered aspirants, only 53,000 have taken the 'opt-out' option.

But the court reiterated that there should be option for change in centre in case the area becomes a containment zone.

The court will now hear the matter on July 2.

Conman who duped 20 employers of lakhs nabbed

Ahmedabad: A 23-year-old man from Rajasthan, who was arrested by Ahmedabad Crime Branch on Monday for allegedly duping at least 20 employers of lakhs of rupees, claimed that he was inspired by the character of conman Frank Abagnale shown in Steven Spielberg's film 'Catch Me If You Can', police said.

The accused, Jai alias Jayesh Soni, a resident of Udaipur, and with his father made several fake IDs using the copies of their original Aadhaar cards in order to

commit fraud. According to officials of Ahmedabad Detection of Crime Branch, the accused managed to commit fraud against 20 employers in Ahmedabad, Vadodara and Udaipur while impersonating different names in the past five years.

"The accused and his father watched 'Catch me if you can' in 2015 and got the idea. Soni learned auditing, tally and excel sheet work from YouTube. He and his father then created fake IDs," said B V Gohil, ACP, DCB.

UP braces for locusts, Lucknow ready with mist guns and DJs

MAULSHREE SETH
LUCKNOW, JUNE 29

ASSWARMS of locusts fly towards central Uttar Pradesh, the Lucknow administration has deployed mist guns and fire tenders for chemical spray, and DJ systems and bands to belt out high decibel sound to ward off the pests.

The UP government recently put the entire state on a high alert and is closely watching the possible movement of locusts towards Lucknow, Kanpur, Auraiya and Unnao due to a change in wind direction. These pests have flown over 19 districts in western and eastern UP as well as Bundelkhand region since May 26 with Jhansi and Auraiya recording major crop losses.

Lucknow Municipal Commissioner Indramani Tripathi said, "We have readied mist sprinklers with a capacity of about 1 lakh litres of chemicals. Twelve DJs and bands are at ready to play high decibel sound. Fire tenders will also be deployed for chemical spray."

As per the Agriculture Department, locusts were sighted in



A drone in action in Farrukhabad in Uttar Pradesh. Express

seven districts on Sunday and four on Monday, and were expected to arrive in Unnao by late evening. Some reports suggest that some swarms have moved towards Bihar and even Nepal.

Though farmers are more vulnerable to losses, Lucknow is no less susceptible as it has several parks and gardens. For example, Lohia Park is spread over 76 acres with a variety of trees and plants, and Janeshwar Mishra Park is situated on 152 hectares of land. The

Governor House boasts of not only lawns but also medicinal and herbal garden known as Dhanvantari Vatika. It also has a horticulture garden where fruits, vegetables and flowers are grown.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, state Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi, "At present, there are reports of locusts in 10-11 districts. Today, there were reports of their settling in Kushinagar district, but farmers used high decibel sound to divert them, and they could not

sit on the crop." He said Rs 3 lakh has been sanctioned to each district to deal with the challenge.

"Today, with the help of a team of the Government of India, drones were used for the first time to sprinkle chemicals on locusts in Farrukhabad district, and they were successfully killed. Air clearance was given for the use of drones," the minister said.

"Officials have also been asked to conduct a survey to assess losses, but in most places, there are no crop losses and a larger damage has been averted so far," said Shahi.

Additional Chief Secretary Agriculture Devesh Chaturvedi said swarms have moved to Unnao and another swarm to Farrukhabad from Fatehpur due to unpredictable wind movement. "We will run operation through drones in Farrukhabad tonight. Some swarms have gone back to Agra. So, this is another challenge. But apart from Jhansi and Auraiya, there has not been much crop damage in the state," he said, adding that even helicopters will be used to eliminate the pests.

Chhattisgarh tribals walk over 50 km to demand cash payment for tendu leaves

GARGI VERMA
BIJAPUR, JUNE 29

ARMED WITH bows and arrows and carrying idols of deities, thousands of villagers from 18 gram panchayats and 50 villages of Bijapur's Gangaloor area walked more than 50 km Monday to gather in protest at the district collector's office with several demands, including cash payment for tendu leaves instead of bank transfers.

The Chhattisgarh government decided to allow cash payment for forest produce in Sukma, Dantewada and Bijapur districts. According to officials, the decision was taken after Chhattisgarh Minister Kawasi Lakhma made a request saying that banks are not accessible for everyone in the three Maoist-affected districts.

On Monday morning, Bijapur police were alerted about a large group walking into the city area from Cherpall. While barricades were set up on different parts of the road, the villagers pushed past them and policemen to reach the collector's office, where a small delegation was allowed to meet the collector, DFO and other officials. No political party was involved.

"Our major demand is that the villagers be paid in cash and not direct bank transfers for the tendu leaves they procure and sell. It is one of the major income sources and coming to the city to withdraw cash is often more expensive than the amount to be withdrawn. Some people don't even have bank accounts," said Raju Kalmu (35), one of the representatives of the delegation.

Ramesh Punem, another representative, said, "We want the



Outside the collector's office on Monday. Express

bonus promised on tendu patta in 2018-2019, an increased scholarship for tribal students, schools and hospitals in the villages. The tribals are tortured by the police, which needs to stop too."

Bastar IG PSundaraj said, "No social gathering is allowed, so we tried hard to disperse the villagers. However, they were not harmed and eventually allowed to reach the collectorate."

Activist Soni Sori was Sunday barred from leaving her house by police after she informed the police about her plans to join the protest. "I also wanted to go to Sarkeguda where an event was organised to create memorials for the people who were killed in 2012 in a fake encounter. However, I wasn't allowed to go to either places by the police, who served me a notice stating that since I have been provided security, I can't go to Naxal-affected areas. This is a violation of my rights and a way to suppress tribal voices," she said.

Sundarraj said, "We couldn't have allowed anyone to go for a public event as due to Covid-19, all public gatherings are banned."

Govt to deploy helicopters to spray pesticides to check locusts

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

AFTER USING drones for locust control, the government will deploy helicopters for aerial spraying of pesticides to stop the spread of the swarms.

According to sources, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar will flag off a helicopter

with spray equipment from a helipad facility at Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday. "The helicopter will fly for Air Force Station at Uttarlai, Barmer, where it will be stationed, and from there it will be deployed for locust control in desert areas of Barmer, Jaisalmer, Bikaner, Jodhpur and Nagaur as per protocol," said a source.

"The helicopter firm, M/s. Malhotra Helicopters, has been fi-

nanced for conduct of single pilot operation with Bell 206-B3 helicopter having pesticide carrying capacity of 250 litres in one trip and which can cover 25-50-hectare area in one flight. The total contract value is around Rs 1.25 crore for a minimum guarantee of 100 hours in 60 days and there is an incentive clause of Rs 10 lakh."

The government earlier used drones to control locust swarms.

It is learnt that the ministry had engaged five companies to provide services of drones. "Until now 12 drones have been deployed for locust control in Jaisalmer, Barmer, Jodhpur, Bikaner and Nagaur," said a source. "India has become the first country to use drones for locust control. Total amount sanctioned for deployment of drones is Rs 1.2 crore for a period of 30 days," the source added.

KERALA

Probe into actress extortion bid exposes gold smuggling racket using celebrities: Police

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JUNE 29

A PROBE into an alleged bid to extort money from a Malayalam film actress has exposed a racket in which film personalities and models in Kerala were used as carriers of smuggled gold, police said.

Kochi City Police on Monday arrested celebrity hair stylist Harris, who hails from Thrissur district, in connection with cases pertaining to extortion of actress Shamma Kasim and some models.

Since last Wednesday, seven persons have been arrested for allegedly threatening and extorting cash from Kasim. The gang allegedly approached her parents with a fake marriage proposal. After a few meetings and phone calls, the parents became suspicious and complained to the police. One of the gang members, who was posing as the prospective bridegroom, had allegedly demanded Rs 1 lakh from Kasim, which led her family to suspect the proposal.

Later, eight models came forward with complaints that they had been kept in captivity and

money was extorted from them. These models were allegedly forced to work as carriers of gold.

Kochi City Police Commissioner Vijay Sakhare told the media that gang members Muhammed Shareef and Rafeeqe contacted Kasim through Harris, who has close links with the film industry. "More victims are coming forward, hence we are looking at registering more cases," he said.

On Monday, police summoned actor Dharmajan Bolgatty based on information that he had been in touch with some of the arrested persons. After deposing, Dharmajan told the media that Harris got Kasim's number from him. Dharmajan said the gang earlier contacted him over phone but he did not take it seriously.

Police sources said there was no evidence so far to suggest that the arrested persons had used film personalities and models as carriers of smuggled gold. They allegedly lured women with the promise of huge remuneration if they worked as carriers of gold. The gang would allegedly extort gold ornaments from them to meet immediate expenses, and promise to pay them back once the gold was ferried. After pocketing the valuables from the women, the gang would abandon them, and threaten them against revealing anything. However, smuggling of gold using celebrities is rampant, police sources added.

Rlys plans to earn via station vendors who will provide thermal cameras

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

ASTHERMAL cameras become increasingly common for scanning body temperatures of people in crowded areas, the Railways has chanced upon a method of earning money out of this.

In a pilot project in Bihar starting Monday, train passengers in Patna railway station will be scanned by a thermal camera for symptoms like fever and whether they are wearing masks. In this case, Railways will earn money for the use of that camera, which will be paid for by a vendor authorised to sell disposable blankets, quilts, sanitisers and masks to the passengers from a dedicated kiosk.

This "earning contract" is the first of its kind in the country, wherein the transporter does not have to shell out money to purchase thermal cameras to screen passengers.

The contract is for setting up of a stall for linen. One of the conditions is that the contractor will also install a thermal camera—with defined specifications for accuracy—whose feed will be monitored by Railway staff, like the RPF. Railways will earn around Rs 1.41 lakh from one stall per year. Railway officials in Delhi said this is a new non-fare-revenue idea.

"We will replicate this in other busy stations like Pataliputra, Danapur, Rajendra Nagar, etc. Since we are not providing any linen item on trains due to Covid-related restrictions, people may want to buy these items. Along with this, we are ensuring that the vendor installs a thermal camera so that we get to scan the passengers. All this will not cost Railways anything," said Sunil Kumar, Divisional Railway Manager of Danapur Division of East Central Railway.

The items on sale at the stall include inflatable pillow, comforter, bedsheets, masks and hand sanitisers. Each item is priced at Rs 50, while the complete set is Rs 200-250.

A thermal camera may cost upwards of Rs 2-4 lakh a piece.

DIRECTORATE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH

Govt. Dental College & Hospital Building 4th floor, St. George's Hospital Compound, P.D' mello Road, Mumbai- 400001.
Tel. No. +91-22-22620361 -65/ 22652251/57/59. Telegram "MEDUCATNSEARCH"
Fax- +91-22-22620562/22652168
Website : <http://www.dmer.org>

No. DMER/G-2/E-tender Notice/Grocery, Vegetables and fruits/2020,3414 Date:- 26.06.2020

E-TENDER NOTICE

1) **DIRECTOR**, Directorate of Medical Education & Research, Mumbai (DMER) invites the tenders by e-tendering process in two envelope systems for Grocery, Vegetables and Fruits for all hospitals and Medical colleges under DMER & Directorate of Ayurved for the period of one year, This notice is also notified in leading English & Marathi Newspaper

Sr. No.	Name of Tender
01	Supply of Grocery to Government Medical/Ayurved Colleges and attached hospital
02	Supply of Vegetables and Fruits to Government Medical/Ayurved Colleges and attached hospital

ANNEXURE "A"

1	Release of tender documents	30.06.2020 1700
2	Download and preparation	30.06.2020 1701 to 22.07.2020 1700
3	Closing of Bid	22.07.2020 1701 to 23.07.2020 1700
4	Date & time for submission of tender	23.07.2020 1701 to 27.07.2020 1700
5	Pre bid Meeting	Queries regarding this tender to be sent via email to above mentioned email id till 09.07.2020 1700 Hrs, any queries received after this shall not be considered
6	Opening of Technical Bid (Envelop No. 1)	28.07.2020 1100
7	Opening of Commercial Bid (Envelop No. 2)	Shall be intimated separately

- For detail information, the bidders interested may visit the website <https://dmer.maharashtra.etenders.in>, <https://maharashtra.gov.in>
- The interested bidders will have to pay service provider fee for online submission of bid @ Rs. 1092/- per submission should be made online mode only. The non refundable tender fee per tender @ Rs. 10000/- (Ten Thousand only) will be paid online.
- Time schedule and Terms & Conditions of tenders are available on the website, <https://dmer.maharashtra.etenders.in>, <http://maharashtra.gov.in>
- The Directorate of Medical Education & Research reserves the right to make any change in the tender terms & conditions & schedules of the tender and can reject the tender without any assigning any reason.
- For e-tendering help/information please contact website : <https://dmer.maharashtra.etenders.in> Email :- gbranchdmer@gmail.com Contact no DMER - 22621988, 22617295 contact no :- Mr. Sandeep - **9167969615** Help Line No - 020-25315555

Sd/-
Director,
Medical Education and Research, Mumbai.

DGIPR-2020-2021/273

BHAKRA BEAS MANAGEMENT BOARD

(Power Wing)

Corrigendum NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
e-NIT No. 1/2020-21/BLB
Name of Office : Addl. Superintending Engineer, In front of Plot No.141, BBMB, Ballabgarh, Sector-25 (Faridabad)-121004
Name of work : Misc. Civil work at 220KV Sub station, BBMB, Ballabgarh.

Estimated Cost	Rs. 8.25 Lakh
Earnest Money	Rs. 8250/-
Tender fee	1000+18% GST extra = (1180/-)
Last date of submission of pre-qualification document	21.07.2020 up to 17:00 hrs.
Last date of receipt of tender	28.07.2020 at 14:00 hrs.

The detailed tender may be downloaded from website www.bbmbeproc.abcpocure.com and www.bbmb.gov.in

1184-PR-TS-4 For Your Better Tomorrow Save Energy Today

उ.प्र. पावर ट्रांसमिशन कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड ई- निविदा सूचना निम्नलिखित कार्य/ आपूर्ति हेतु ई-निविदायें दो भागों में जी.एस.टी. धर्मोहरा, प्रतिष्ठित एवं अनुभवी ठेकेदारों/ फर्मों से ऑन लाईन ई-निविदा पोर्टल वेबसाइट 'http://etender.up.nic.in' पर आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा मूल्य जी.एस.टी. सहित तथा धर्मोहरा राशि आर.टी.जी.एस./ एन.एफ.आई.टी./बैंक गारंटी के माध्यम से अधिशासी अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, अमरोहा के भारतीय स्टेट बैंक शाखा-जोधा (जिला-अमरोहा) में संचालित चालू खाता सं. (Current Account)- 30723557626, IFSC Code- SBIN 0007413, MICR No. 244002026 में टेंडर खुलने की दिनांक से एक दिन पूर्व तक जमा करें। अन्य नियम व शर्त विभाग के निर्धारित नियम व शर्त उ.प्र.पावर कारपोरेशन लि. के फार्म ए/बी के अनुसार होगी जिन्हें किसी भी कार्यदिवस में अथोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता के कार्यालय में देखा जा सकता है। विस्तृत विवरण ई-निविदा पोर्टल वेबसाइट पर निविदा खुलने के अन्तिम तिथि एवं समय तक उपलब्ध रहेगा। निविदा किसी भी संशोधन या तिथि विस्तार ई-निविदा पोर्टल पर अवश्य देख लिया जाए। ई निविदा खुलने की दिनांक:- 25.07.2020 1. ई-निविदा संख्या-116/- ई.टी.सी.डि./ एम./ 2020 विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, अमरोहा के अंतर्गत 132 के.वी. उपकेन्द्र सैदनगली पर 01 नं. 132 के.वी. एवं 01 नं. 33 के.वी. वे बनाने का कार्य। धर्मोहरा राशि रु. 4000/-, निविदा प्रपत्र का जी.एस.टी. सहित मूल्य रु. 590/- 2. ई-निविदा संख्या-117/- ई.टी.सी.डि./ एम./ 2020 विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, अमरोहा के अंतर्गत 220 के.वी. उपकेन्द्र गजरीला एवं 132 के.वी. सैदनगली पर अग्निशमन यंत्रों को भरने एवं पेंटिंग का कार्य। धर्मोहरा राशि रु. 2000/-, निविदा प्रपत्र का जी.एस.टी. सहित मूल्य रु. 590/-, 3. ई-निविदा संख्या-118/- ई.टी.सी.डि./ एम./ 2020 विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, धामपुर के अंतर्गत 132 के.वी. उपकेन्द्र नजीबाबाद पर अग्निशमन उपकरणों को भरने खराब पार्ट बदलने एवं पेंटिंग का कार्य। धर्मोहरा राशि रु. 2000/-, निविदा प्रपत्र का जी.एस.टी. सहित मूल्य रु. 590/-, 4. ई-निविदा संख्या-119/- ई.टी.सी.डि./ एम./ 2020 विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, बिजौर के अंतर्गत 132 के.वी. उपकेन्द्र ताजपुर पर सिक्वैरिटी फैनसिंग की सफाई एवं घास आदि निकालने का अनुप्रेक्षण का कार्य। धर्मोहरा राशि रु. 2000/-, निविदा प्रपत्र का जी.एस.टी. सहित मूल्य रु. 590/-, 5. ई-निविदा संख्या-120/- ई.टी.सी.डि./ एम./ 2020 विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड, अमरोहा के अंतर्गत 220 के.वी. उपकेन्द्र गजरीला पर 36 के.वी. Rama Make Male/Female Arms Assembly की आपूर्ति। धर्मोहरा राशि रु. 2000/-, निविदा प्रपत्र का जी.एस.टी. सहित मूल्य रु. 590/-, "गुट्ट हित में बिजली बचावें" हस्ता./-अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारेषण मंडल द्वितीय, उ.प्र. पावर ट्रान्स. कार्पो लि. मुगदाबाद पत्रांक-1474 वि.पा.स.डि.मु./ई-निविदा/2020 दिनांक 29/06/2020

HARYANA GOVERNMENT

TENDER NOTICE

SRL No.	NAME OF BOARD/COMP./AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT / RPD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD/COMP./AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	FEEDC	DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, OPERATION TO 10.2 TO 12.5 MILES OF CTRP AND O&M OF 3 YEARS BASED ON EXTENDED OPERATION. TECHNOLOGY AT IE INDUSTRIAL, DISTT. SONBET.	01.07.2020 22.07.2020	771.00 LACS.	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	(9911)250699 to hark@indtel.org.in
2	GRDA GURUGRAM	CONSTRUCTION OF SURFACE DRAIN TO MASTER STORM WATER DRAIN, PROVIDING IN FENCE OF RCD COVER, ROAD GULLY CONSTRUCTION AND MAINT. OF SURFACE DRAIN AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN GURUGRAM AND ALL OTHER WORKS NOTED IN THE BIDS.	26.06.2020 02.07.2020	833RD/-	https://www.grda.gov.in	sonu2022.grda@gmail.com
3	HAFED, PANDELIKA	HAFED INVITED E-TENDER FOR ENGAGEMENT OF CONSULTANCY AGENCY FOR PREPARATION OF ERM, ENVIRONMENTAL PRIVATE PARTNER AND PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION ON ONE OF THE WELLS UNIT AT PANDELIKA (FARIDABAD) AND UP GRADATION / REGRADATION OF TWO EXISTING HAFED OIL WELLS AT PANDELIKA / HARNALI.	27.06.2020 11.07.2020	1 LAKH	https://www.grda.gov.in	0177-2590531 oad@grda@gmail.com
4	GRDA, GURUGRAM	DESIGNING & CONSTRUCTION OF FASTER SEWER LINE FROM THRO CHOWK TO BATH CHOWK (ALONG N.H. -6), GURUGRAM.	27.06.2020 11.07.2020	2.73 LACS	https://www.grda.gov.in	sonu2022.grda@gmail.com
5	GRDA, GURUGRAM	PROVIDING AND LAYING OF RECYCLE FIRE LINE FROM SAR PROH RAJ TO VILLAGE SARANDEH IN SECTION 29A, GURUGRAM.	27.06.2020 11.07.2020	7.18 LACS	https://www.grda.gov.in	sonu2022.grda@gmail.com
6	GRDA, GURUGRAM	PROVIDING, LAYING, JOINTING AND CLOSING OF 200MM I/D RCD PIPE WITH 25MM THICK HDPE LINING, CONSTRUCTION OF R.F.S. DRAINAGE, RESURFACING OF EXISTING R.F.S. ROAD AND RE-CONSTRUCT THE SAME FROM R/F TO STP CHANWAL, GURUGRAM AND ALL OTHER WORKS NOTED IN THE BIDS.	19.06.2020 09.07.2020	12.02 LACS	https://www.grda.gov.in	sonu2022.grda@gmail.com

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT: www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in

JHARKHAND URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED

3rd FLOOR, RKDA BUILDING, PRAGATI SADAN, KUTCHERY RANCHI 834 001, JHARKHAND
Ph: +91 661 225222, Cell no: +91 9431103781
e-mail: jaidcoindia@gmail.com
CIN: U45200JH2013SG0001752

CORRIGENDUM 1
NIT No. - JUIDCO/NIT/WSS/2243/2019/342
Tender ID:- 2020 UDD 45110 1 Ref PR No.:- 228873

All the bidders are hereby informed that Corrigendum I for the tender "Selection of Consultant for Preparation of Detail Project Report (DPR) and providing Project Management Consultancy (PMC) services for Augmentation and Strengthening/ New water Supply Scheme in 11 towns of Jharkhand namely Mahagama Nagar Panchayat, Barharwa Nagar Panchayat, Kapali Nagar Parishad, Chhatrapurnagar Panchayat, Baharganj Nagar Panchayat, Banshidhamnagar Nagar Panchayat, Dhanwar Nagar Panchayat, Barki Saraiya Nagar Panchayat, Domchanch Nagar Panchayat, Gomiy Nagar Parishad and Bachra Nagar Parishad in Jharkhand" has been published on the e-procurement website of Government of Jharkhand.

It is requested to please refer the same before submission of bids. e-procurement website-<http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in>

Sd/-
Project Director (Tech.)
JUIDCO Ltd., Ranchi

PR.No.230071 Urban Development(20-21):D

WESTERN RAILWAY-AHMEDABAD DIVISION

SUPPLY OF RUBBER SHEET
SMM (DL) SBI on behalf of the President of India invites following electronic open tenders for supply of materials. (1) Tender No: 72-20-5136, Brief Description of Material: Rubber Sheet Acid, Oil & Alkali Proof. QTY: 15 Nos. Date & time of E-tender box closing: 18.07.2020, 11:00 hrs. Regarding detailed tender notice containing purchase restrictions and detailed tender conditions, please visit website: www.ireps.gov.in. Manual offers will not be considered. AD-55

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HRD proposes to provide laptops, smartphones to 4 cr students in 5 years

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

WITH THE Covid-19 outbreak exposing the digital divide in education, the HRD Ministry has projected an expenditure of Rs 60,000 crore, over five years, on providing digital devices to four crore students in higher education.

The ministry made this projection in a presentation to the 15th Finance Commission on Monday. The commission had called the meeting to discuss education "in the time of Covid-19".

The department of higher education has proposed to provide devices such as laptops, tablets, smartphones and TVs to almost 40 per cent of the students enrolled in colleges and universities by 2025-26. Currently, there are around 3.75 crore students enrolled in higher education institutions. In the first year, that is 2021-22, it plans to cover 1.5 crore students, followed by 55 lakh in 2022-23, 61 lakh in 2023-24, 67 lakh in 2024-25 and 73 lakh in 2025-26. The ministry has assumed an average cost of Rs 15,000 for each device. The Centre's share is pegged at Rs 36,473 crore over five years. The remaining is proposed to be borne by the state governments.

Given that even after it is deemed safe to return to the classroom, it may not be a return to what was considered normal, the ministry has also sought funds to develop more content for online learning.

BIHAR
3 cops suspended after businessman says they filed false case, kept his cash

Patna: The Station House Office (SHO) and two other policemen of Chitragupta Nagar police station in Bihar's Khagaria district were suspended Monday following a probe into a businessman's allegations that a patrol party framed his employee in a liquor case and took cash worth Rs 14.60 lakh belonging to him.

The suspensions of SHO Subodh Pandit and two police constables from a police patrol team known as Tiger Mobile came after Rs 1.19 lakh in cash was recovered from one of them.

Businessman Gaurav Kumar had told police that on Sunday, he and his staff, Raja Mandal, had gone to deposit the cash in Chitragupta. Gaurav dropped Mandal and went to buy medicines, saying he would return soon to deposit the cash, he said.

In the meantime, the Tiger mobile team arrived and allegedly put four liquor bottles in Mandal's bag. They then allegedly arrested Mandal, Gaurav told the police.

Earlier, SP Minu Kumari said, "We have initiated an inquiry... which is being conducted by SDPO Alok Ranjan." **ENS**

नोटिस

नियत 6 (1) (2) (3)

सर्व साधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि हरियाणा पंचायती राज निर्वाचन नियामक 1994 के नियम 6 में किये गये प्रावधान अनुसार खण्ड सोहना को सभी ग्राम पंचायतों में सरपंच / पंच के चुनाव के लिए अनुसूचित जाति, पिछड़ा वर्ग, एवं सामान्य वर्ग की महिलाओं सहित आश्रण के लिए निचे लिखे गये स्थान, लिखित व समय पर अद्योहरकारी द्वारा ज्ञा कोला जायेगा। इस अवसर पर आप सभी को सादर आमंत्रित किया जाता है। यह आश्रण पंचायती राज संस्थाओं के आगामी आम चुनाव के लिए अपेक्षित है।

स्थान : खण्ड विकास एवं पंचायत अधिकारी, सोहना

तिथि : 06.07.2020

समय : प्रातः 11:00 बजे

(Ms. Chinar Chahal, HCS)

उप मण्डल अधिकारी (नॉ)

सोहना-गुरुग्राम

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Date: 30.06.2020

DIPR R.O. No.: 689-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2020-21

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Date: June 16, 2020

Sd/- Acting Registrar

Pakistan reopens Kartarpur Corridor, visits from India remain on hold

Punjab Chief Minister in favour of opening Corridor, but says Delhi was given short notice



A 'special Ardas' was held at Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur on Monday. *Express*

government to restart registrations for the pilgrimage.

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, meanwhile, said that he was in favour of opening the corridor while adhering to norms of social distancing, but added that the Centre could not be ready for the reopening at such short notice.

"I want the Kartarpur Corridor to be open. There can be social distancing... If they ask me, I will suggest that it can be opened with social distancing," the Chief Minister said.

A 'special Ardas' was held at Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, Kartarpur, at 12.30 pm on Monday to mark the death anniversary of

Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Talking to *The Indian Express* over the phone, president of the Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee Satwant Singh said: "A local *sangat* (religious group) held a small function at Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib on the occasion of the death anniversary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. *Sangats* from Pakistan can now visit. A *sangat* from Nankana Sahib and Lahore also went to Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib today... Everything is ready here. Now we have been waiting for permission from the Indian government to open the corridor. All the arrangements have been made to entertain visitors from India."

Amir Hashmi, spokesperson for the Evacuee Trust Property Board Deputy (ETPB), said: "Devotees wore masks and were made to clean their hands with sanitiser. All precautions related to Covid-19 were taken. There was proper security arrangement."

The ETPB looks after holy places of minorities in Pakistan.

Satwant Singh added: "We have made all arrangements related to Covid-19. Our sevadars will remain deployed along the corridor and social distancing will be followed..."

Speaking to news agency PTI, ETPB director Imran Khan confirmed: "Pakistan today opened the Kartarpur Corridor. However, no Indian pilgrim visited it."

He added: "Pilgrims from Pakistan and India are allowed to visit the Darbar Sahib by following the SOPs of social distancing. The ETPB and PSGPC have made special arrangements for the safety of pilgrims."

The pilgrimage was temporarily suspended on March 16 in view of the coronavirus outbreak. The corridor, which opened in November last year, was used by 44,951 Indians till January this year.

(WITH PTI, ISLAMABAD)

Little demand for Shramik trains, will run if needed: Rlys

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

THE RUN of the Shramik Special trains may be coming to an end with no fresh demand pending from the states, even though the Railways will run these specials if demand arises, officials said.

"There was demand for just one train from Karnataka and that train is running today (Monday) from Bengaluru to Muzaffarpur. There is no demand for such trains tomorrow as well. We will run them if demand arises from states," a Railways spokesperson said. The spokesperson said 4,596 Shramik trains have been run since May 1. He said the demand for has been reducing significantly starting June.

Shramik trains are being operated primarily on the request of the states. Officials also said while demand was reducing, occupancy in trains to big cities such as Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Bengaluru from states such as Bihar, UP and West Bengal was almost 100 per cent, indicating beginning of economic activities. These three states accounted for 81 per cent of the 4,596 Shramik Special trains operated so far.

(Patna-Mokama route) and NH-80 (Begusarai-Purnea route).

It would be crucial for farmers in north Bihar as they will be able to travel to markets across the Ganga in much less time to sell their produce. The bridge would also provide easy access to 13 industrial units in Begusarai and Barauni in the event of any industrial accident there.

The National Highway Authority of India has made a rare exception to clear the feasibility report of the bridge. As per rule, within 50 km of a bridge, upstream or downstream, a new bridge cannot be considered. But in this case, the shortening of travel distance, potential benefits to the rural economy and upcoming

Assembly polls seem to have worked in the project's favour.

Rajya Sabha MP Rakesh Sinha told *The Indian Express*, "At a time when the Central government has been pushing the policy of getting markets to farmers and rural India, the construction of the proposed bridge would connect industrial towns of Begusarai and Barauni to three states for trades, saving time and energy on fuel."

Begusarai resident Amrendra Singh, who hails from Mathihani, said, "This bridge would be a realisation of a dream. Farmers will be able to go to the neighbouring towns across Ganga in a matter of 30 minutes to one hour; they now take four hours via the Mokama bridge."

Eye on Bihar polls, Central govt clears Begusarai bridge project

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, JUNE 29

THE CENTRE has given clearance for the construction of a bridge in poll-bound Bihar that would reduce travel distance between Begusarai in north Bihar and the south Bihar towns of Munger and Bhagalpur by at least 70 km.

The bridge would also cut travel distance between north Bihar towns and the neighbouring states of Jharkhand and Odisha, and between Munger and the neighbouring country of Nepal.

The 2.5-km bridge will link the riverine areas of Mathihani and Sambho and also join the NH-31

Man says 40-minute delay at UP hospital led to infant son's death, authorities deny

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, JUNE 29

THE FATHER of a one-year-old child who died at the district hospital in Kannauj on Sunday has accused the hospital authorities of a 40 minute delay in admission, saying it led to the death of his child. Hospital authorities however, dismissed the allegations.

The incident came to light when a video of the parents of the child were seen grieving and weeping over the death of their child and clinging to his body.

The man in the video, identified as Prem Chand — a farmer — accused the hospital of not treat-

ing his son for 40 minutes. "On reaching the emergency ward, doctors refused to admit my son stating that there is no bed empty. We made several requests, but no doctor paid any heed. Around 40 minutes later, a group of journalists arrived and after seeing us weeping spoke to the hospital administration. We were then allowed to enter the emergency ward."

According to Prem Chand, the infant was suffering from fever and respiratory problems.

The hospital's Chief Medical Superintendent Dr UC Chaturvedi said, "We tried our best to save the child. The child was alive for around 30 minutes. A paediatrician was also called..."

"The child was in a serious condition and unconscious when brought to the hospital. Doctors admitted the child immediately. This is a false allegation," Dr Chaturvedi said, adding that the child's neck, adding that the doctors suspect it was a case of viral encephalitis.

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Email : investors@smlisuzu.com Website address: www.smlisuzu.com

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, that a meeting of the Board of Directors of SML ISUZU LIMITED (the Company) which was scheduled on 30th June, 2020 (Tuesday) will now be held on 21st July, 2020 (Tuesday), through video conferencing, inter-alias, to consider and approve the Audited Financial Results for the 4th Quarter and Year ended 31st March, 2020.

The information is also available on the Company's website www.smlisuzu.com and also on the website of the Stock Exchanges viz. BSE Limited- www.bseindia.com and the National Stock Exchange of India Limited- www.nseindia.com.

Dated: 29.06.2020

Place: Chandigarh

For SML ISUZU LIMITED (PARVESH MADAN) Company Secretary

PARSVNATH DEVELOPERS LIMITED

Regd. & Corporate Office: Parsvnath Metro Tower, Near Shahdara Metro Station, Shahdara, Delhi - 110032

CIN : L45201DL1990PLC040945; Tel. : 011-43010500, 011-43050100,

E-mail : mail@parsvnath.com ; website : www.parsvnath.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas, M/s Parsvnath Developer Ltd is in the process of obtaining approval of Revised Building Plans for IT park Colony area 6.445 acres falling in Sector-48 Gurugram in accordance with the provision of License no 47 of 2008 dated 11.03.2008 granted by Director, Town & Country Planning Haryana, Chandigarh.

And whereas, several individuals have made booking/entered into purchase agreement for allotment of units in the said Towers (hereinafter referred as allottees)

And whereas the office of Director, Town & Country Planning Haryana, and Chandigarh has required seeking of objections against revision of building plans vide memo no ZP-381/JD (NC)/2020/3737 dated 07.02.2020

Accordingly, vide this public notice, objections are hereby invited from any of the allottees on the proposed revision. A copy of the building Plans sanctioned vide memo no ZP-381/7568 dated 27.07.2009 and proposed revised Building Plans are available for perusal on website www.parsvnath.com. The Sanctioned Plans and proposed revised Building Plans can also be perused at the office of Undersigned at "Parsvnath Metro Tower, Near Shahdara Metro Station, Shahdara, Delhi 110031 as well as in the office of Senior Town Planner, Gurugram

Any Allottee having any objection on the above said revision, may file his objection in the office of Senior Town Planner Gurugram within 30 Days of the publication of notice, failing which it shall be assumed that there are no objection to these constructed towers at site.

Place: Delhi

Date: 29 June, 2020

For Parsvnath Developers Limited

Amit Jain

(Authorized Signatory)

3 militants killed in Anantnag encounter

ADIL AKHZER
SRINAGAR, JUNE 29

THREE MILITANTS, including a Hizbul Mujahideen commander from Jammu's Doda district, were killed in an encounter with security forces in South Kashmir's Anantnag district on Monday, police said.

With the killing of the Hizb commander, Doda district is now militancy-free, J&K Police said.

Police officials said that a cordon and search operation was launched in Khulchohar village of Anantnag, during which militants fired at security forces and triggered an encounter early morning. "A successful operation was carried out on specific information by police and security forces today. We killed three militants, including a district commander of HM from Doda. With his killing, Doda is now militancy-free," IGP

Kashmir Vijay Kumar said. A police spokesperson said the other two were Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) militants. "Two LeT terrorists including one district commander and one HM commander Masood were

MILITANTS ATTACK
ARMY CAMP

Srinagar: Militants attacked an Army camp in Central Kashmir's Budgam on Monday evening, police said. "As per reports, an UBGL was fired at 50 RR Army camp Chhatergam. The UBGL fell outside camp. No injuries reported. Area cordoned and search started," Budgam police said. **ENS**

neutralised. Doda district in Jammu zone becomes totally militancy-free once again as Masood was the last surviving terrorist of Doda district," the spokesperson said. He said that Masood was involved in a rape case and "absconding ever since. He later joined Hizb and shifted his area of operation to Kashmir."

Superintendent of Police, Doda, Mumtaz Ahmed said the district now has no local or foreign militants. A Defense spokesperson said in Srinagar that one AK-47 and two pistols were recovered from the encounter site.

Government of Madhya Pradesh

Environment Department

Vallabh Bhawan, Mantralaya, Bhopal

Advertisement

No F 5-1/2017/18-5

Bhopal, dated 19 June, 2020

Applications are invited for the position of Chairman and Members in the State Environmental Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) & State Expert Appraisal Committee (SEAC) to be constituted as per provision of Environment Impact Assessment Notification 2006 for Madhya Pradesh. The Authority/Committee shall appraise proposal for grant of prior Environmental Clearance. The necessary qualifications are as follows:

Chairman: Outstanding & experienced environmental policy expert or expert in management or public administration with wide experience in development sector.

Member: Shall be professional / expert with experience in any of following fields / discipline: Environmental quality / project Management / Environmental Impact Assessment Process / Risk Assessment / Life Science Expert in Floral & Fauna Management / Forestry and Wildlife / Environmental Economics with experience in Project Appraisal as defined in Appendix-VI of the EIA Notification 2006.

Age Limit: Below 70 years which could be relaxed to 75 years in case of non availability of experts in a given field. Application along with bio-data in enclosed Performa, undertaking regarding no conflicts of interest with their present assignment (if applicable) may be sent to the Executive Director, Environmental Planning & Coordination Organization (EPCO), Paryavaran Parisar, E-5, Arera Colony, Bhopal. (Phone-0755-2466859, 2466970) or through e-mail mpseiaa@gmail.com or epcobpl@sanchamnet.in within 15 days from the date of publication of the advertisement. Application received after the prescribed date will not be entertained in any case. Complete details about educational qualification and eligibility criteria can be seen at www.mpseiaa.nic.in.

Sd/- (Rakesh Kushre)

Dy. Secretary Govt. of MP

G-12326/20 मास्क का उपयोग करें, कोरोना से बचें Environment Department

The Indian EXPRESS

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THE INDIAN EXPRESS, TUESDAY, JUNE 30, 2020

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

WORDLY WISE
OF COURSE, HATE SPEECH AND RACISM
HAVE NO PLACE ON FACEBOOK
— MARK ZUCKERBERG

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

DEATH IN CUSTODY

Guilty must be urgently brought to book in the Tamil Nadu custodial death case, culture of impunity must end

THE DEATH OF a father and son, allegedly due to torture in a police station near Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu, a few days ago, raises serious questions about the conduct of the police. Three inspectors attached to the Sathankulam station have been suspended and an inquiry instituted against two head constables. The state government now wants the CBI to probe the case. More than two weeks ago, the same set of officials was accused of beating up some persons, allegedly leading to the death of one — a district judge asked for a detailed inquiry, describing it as a “disturbing incident of custodial torture” in his report to the Madras High Court. The two incidents, reprehensible in themselves, also point to a wider culture of impunity that prevails in the law and order system, emboldening police officials to flout due process and perpetrate violence on citizens in the expectation of getting away with it.

It is not incidental that recent complaints of police brutality have come in the backdrop of the restrictions imposed by the government to contain COVID-19. The pandemic has evidently become a pretext in cases like these to short-circuit the rule of law. Many cases of police excess, including thrashing of migrant workers, hawkers and shop keepers, have been reported during the lockdown. In the Sathankulam incident, the police had detained P Jeyaraj, 62, a shopkeeper, and his son, Bennix, 32, on June 19 for allegedly violating lockdown restrictions. Three days later, they died in judicial custody, allegedly due to injuries suffered during their detention. Initially, the government denied a police role in the deaths and agreed to a probe only after public outcry. Coming in the wake of the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, US, and the worldwide protests it sparked, large sections of civil society in Tamil Nadu have expressed outrage and demanded action against the accused policemen — including film director Hari, who apologised for glorifying police brutality in blockbuster films such as *Singam*. This genre of popular cinema that celebrates the brutal cop who takes the law into his hands to deliver instant justice, has arguably contributed to shaping attitudes within the police force as well as in the public. According to data submitted by state police before Madras High Court, there were 157 custodial deaths in Tamil Nadu between 2012 and 2016.

The CBI must urgently fix accountability for the deaths in Sathankulam. As for the government, it needs to do more to send out the message that police excess will not be tolerated under any circumstances. It must not only end the prevalent culture of impunity but also impress upon the force that due process must be upheld and that it is not a privilege but the citizen's right.

FACING THE MUSIC

Hate speech can no longer be ignored, as economic sanctions drive point home to world's largest social media platform

IN SILICON VALLEY, money talks. Since it's Valley money, its voice carries further. Money preached the dotcom boom in the Noughties and talks up the digital agenda on Nasdaq. But now, for the first time, in an industry fanatically focused on the future, money is urging the Silicon Valley giants to consider their ethics. Facebook has finally been confronted with the problem of hate speech that it had tried to ignore for years, with Unilever joining a boycott by about 100 advertisers. One of the world's biggest multinationals has imposed financial sanctions on the world's biggest social media platform.

Facebook has about-faced. The platform, which had refused to deal with posts by President Trump that opponents read as voter intimidation, said that posts suppressing the popular vote or threatening violence were not on. But the company has wilfully lagged behind social media rival, Twitter, which had marked Trump's tweets as “glorifying violence” and “manipulated media” in May and June. Facebook's attempts to curb hate speech have been mere token gestures, and the latest update is just a patch. In reaction, Coca-Cola has signalled distrust by pulling its ads from the social network.

In its early years, the internet was embraced as an alternative universe, a haven of completely free speech, where the ugly side of human nature had free play because its games had no real-world implications. In the Nineties, hosting companies resisted attempts to curb hate speech and even child pornography, simultaneously pleading the freedom of speech and the inability to police third-party content. As the digital revolution built up and brick-and-mortar functions like banking moved online, the internet became a mirror of the offline world, and arguably should have been subject to everyday accountability and responsibilities. Technically, platform companies are only new avatars of the hosts of the Nineties. They host third-party content and have inherited the reluctance of their predecessors to distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil. But like them, they exist at the pleasure of those third parties, some of which are sources of huge revenues. In international affairs, sanctions are used to bring problematic nations in line. A similar process of financial apartheid could force companies the size of national economies to see reason. It has been used to curb modern slavery in sweat factories, and it is now being turned on the world's biggest corporations. In Silicon Valley, money is talking again — not in the voice of greed, but of morality.

PRESSING RESTART

Bundesliga took the decisive step, sent out the signal that sport needn't be a casualty of the pandemic

AMONG THE EUROPEAN leagues, the Bundesliga is the most unassuming and unpretentious. It doesn't gloat over fancy stars, it doesn't brag about tactical novelties, it doesn't indulge in showboating of wealth, it seldom buys stars, but often sells them. But as the latest season concluded — predictably with Bayern Munich wrapping up the title and Robert Lewandowski snapping up the golden boot — the league has reasons to bask in the afterglow of its initiative to resume the season in the middle of the pandemic, the first high-profile competition in the coronavirus era.

When a sliver of uncertainty flashed across the sporting world, Bundesliga took a decisive step, installing the template to restart sport amid fear. It drilled home a lesson that sport needn't be a casualty of the pandemic. The planning and execution of the league were flawless. The medical protocols, risk-assessment and player-monitoring were impeccable, and the officials were relieved that there wasn't an instance of a player or support-staff member testing positive. Without the German league's sense of purpose, its leadership and vision, none of its more ostentatious European cousins would have had the conviction or courage to press the restart button.

Missing, though, was the passionate crowd — games in Germany are the most attended in the world, and arguably the most colourful too. But in the circumstances, playing inside closed doors was the only alternative. As the CEO of the league, Christian Seifert, noted: “This isn't the Bundesliga that we wanted or that we love, but it was the only Bundesliga that was possible.” But, on the other hand, the league gained more audience worldwide, for it was the only competitive sporting event running on television. If at least half of them return next year, the league's viewership could leap over some of its counterparts. It also threw in a grim clue, though, as the rights for top-two division went for €200m less than the previous contract, forewarning that football, too, is heading for austerity-stricken days.



VINAY SITAPATI

I LANDED IN Hyderabad airport in late 2014, and hailed a taxi to meet Narasimha Rao's youngest son. Having read a book on Deng Xiaoping, who led China's transformation in the 1980s, I wanted to write a book on India changing in the 1990s, alongside the life of our Deng Xiaoping. Beyond that I didn't know much of PV Narasimha Rao, prime minister of India from 1991 to 1996. Nor, it seemed, did most Indians, who remembered him only as an indecisive scholar who knew how to be silent in ten languages. But here I was, finally on his home turf (the new state of Telangana had been carved out from Andhra Pradesh just months earlier). Surely, here, people would know all about their most distinguished son. In my excitement, I asked my taxi driver about Narasimha Rao. Had he heard of him? Yes, came the reply after some thought. “He's the man after whom a flyover is named.”

Reading about the TRS-run Telangana government's recent decision to mark Rao's birth centenary through year-long celebrations, I remembered that deflating moment. Finally, it seems, Rao will be popularised by more than just one eponymous flyover.

Telangana's decision is partly motivated by the anger felt by at least some Telugu-speakers at the Congress's treatment of Rao. As prime minister, Rao did much to undercut Sonia Gandhi — then a private citizen. But that hardly justifies the ignominy with which he has been treated by the Congress since: His dead body was refused entry into the party headquarters, his name and face have been erased from Congress offices, websites, and brochures. In the course of research for my eventual biography of Narasimha Rao, *Half Lion: How PV Narasimha Rao transformed India*, a TRS leader remembered the time when his party was in coalition with the Congress in what was then Andhra Pradesh. He wanted to erect a statue of Rao in Warangal, but the local Congressmen refused. “If the statue is built, then they have to go garland [it]. If someone takes a photo and Sonia madam sees it... they did not want that.” This relegation of Rao by the Congress resonates in a new state that sees itself as historically

The shrinking of PV

Shunned by his party, resurrected as a regional icon, Narasimha Rao belongs to India, not just Telangana

The primary reason why the Telangana government is honouring Narasimha Rao is with an eye to history. What makes Telangana unique is not language, but the fact that its districts were all ruled by the Nizam, and continue to remain poor in comparison to coastal Andhra Pradesh. This is hardly a past that allows for a glorious myth of origin. Hence the need to erect local statues and elevate home-grown heroes. And Narasimha Rao — from Karimnagar, just hours north of Hyderabad — is very much a son of their soil. The only problem with this reason is that in his early years in Andhra politics, Rao was never in favour of a separate Telangana, preferring instead regional concessions within a united state.

relegated. And it is perhaps this sympathy that the TRS now seeks to convert into votes.

But this vote-garnering aside, the primary reason why the Telangana government is honouring Rao is with an eye to history. What makes Telangana unique is not language, but the fact that its districts were all ruled by the Nizam, and continue to remain poor in comparison to coastal Andhra Pradesh. This is hardly a past that allows for a glorious myth of origin. Hence the need to erect local statues and elevate home-grown heroes. And Rao — from Karimnagar, just hours north of Hyderabad — is very much a son of their soil.

The only problem with this reason is that in his early years in Andhra politics, Rao was never in favour of a separate Telangana, preferring instead regional concessions within the framework of a united state. He was, in fact, made chief minister in 1971 both because he was from Telangana (to appease the separate state movement) as well as because he was against a separate state (thus assuaging the more powerful Andhra lobby). And once he lost power in 1973, he retreated to Delhi, becoming general secretary of the Congress, then central minister and, finally prime minister — all the while having little to do with his home state. For a man such as this to be resurrected as a regional icon does contain some irony.

The irony is even greater given that his two years as Andhra Pradesh chief minister were defined by failure. His one claim to fame — introducing sweeping land reforms — led to his own dismissal by then prime minister Indira Gandhi. His time in regional politics was so disheartening that Rao commenced writing a roman-à-clef — published decades later as ‘The Insider’. The story: How an idealist, trapped in the smoke and mirrors of politics, ends up a failure.

In contrast to this flop at the state level, Rao's term as prime minister in the 1990s was a game changer. He steered India's foreign policy after the collapse of the Soviet Union; he created, for the first time, national level schemes in health, education, and em-

ployment guarantee; he was — in Atal Bihari Vajpayee's words — the “true father” of India's nuclear programme. And, above all, he navigated political landmines to push through economic liberalisation. In this last achievement, Manmohan Singh and Amar Nath Verma proved able subordinates. I detail these achievements in my biography, marshalling evidence to show that Rao was not just a silent onlooker, but an active manager of these changes.

What makes these reforms seem miraculous was that it was all done by a fragile prime minister. Rao ran a minority government, always at risk of a no-confidence motion that could force his resignation. And within this own party, he was forever destabilised by colleagues such as Arjun Singh, ND Tiwari, and Sharad Pawar. He also had to keep Sonia Gandhi in good humour. For a leader as weak as Rao to bring about the transformation he did has few parallels in world politics.

There were mistakes, to be sure. As Union home minister in 1984, he chose to listen to a direct command from the prime minister's office, and relinquished power over Delhi Police to the PMO, just ahead of the killing of Sikhs in the national capital. And his error of judgment in not dismissing the Uttar Pradesh state government before the 6th of December 1992 has haunted India since. But these stains aside, the sheer scale of Rao's national impact makes him, in my opinion, India's most consequential prime minister.

That Rao is not celebrated more at the national level has several causes, including Rao's own reticence. But the chief culprit is his own party, unwilling to highlight any prime minister who does not come from one single family. Given this silence in New Delhi, Hyderabad's decision to extol Narasimha Rao is to be welcomed. But it is a distortion of history. In the ultimate analysis, Rao belongs to all of India.

The writer, who teaches in Ashoka University, is author of Half Lion: How PV Narasimha Rao transformed India, 2016, and is currently writing a history of the BJP



SWAMI AGNIVESH AND VALSON THAMPU

EMANCIPATED BY VIRUS

Post-COVID, religion must be God-centred and priest-free

WE ARE living, said Pope Francis, not so much in an era of change as in a change of era. The COVID-19 pandemic is a watershed moment in history. The present disarray, destruction and suffering are the birthing pangs of a new era. We hear the footfalls of the departing gods fading behind us, even if we don't see the footprints of the incoming gods in front of us.

The brunt of this transition falls on religions because they thrive on the past. All religions claim to be inheritors of exclusive spiritual legacies, which they treat as closed systems. They hold zealously to the letter and litter of it, even though the world around them has changed beyond recognition. As a result, religions remain enclaves of regression in an ever-changing world.

This results from the supremacy that religions attach to “faith”. Faith is pitted against reason. Surely, this cannot be faith in God; for God is Supreme Reason. It is faith in the religious establishment and its agendas. This specious faith is used to suppress in human beings the divine attributes of love, truth, justice and compassion. This goes against the grain of scriptures. For that reason, the light of scriptures is kept hidden from believers. Historically, it was the priestly class that exalted faith above the attributes of God. This had the effect of the dethroning of God.

Misusing faith, religious establishments and the priestly class distorted religious culture and made the life of religious communities centred not on God, but places of worship.

The virus has freed us from our addiction to priestly potions in temples, churches, and mosques. The fact that the rupture in people's addiction to places of worship is enabling many to recognise the superfluity of priest-manipulated, temple-centred religiosity, is troubling the priestly class as a whole. It is now fairly clear that religiosity of this kind was not for the sake of the people, but people were being used for the profit of religious establishments.

To hide the irrationality this entailed, they distorted the idea of God. Consequently, the omnipresent God became a local deity who stays tamely confined within the narrow radius of priestly interests and sleights of hand. God was turned into an alibi for fragmenting humankind, and an excuse for spreading communal poison. God of love became God of hate. God of truth became God of untruth. God of light became God of darkness.

It looks as though the COVID pandemic has come to emancipate us from this subhuman religiosity. The virus has freed us from our addiction to priestly potions in temples, churches, and mosques. The fact that the rupture in people's addiction to places of worship is enabling many to recognise the superfluity of priest-manipulated, temple-centred religiosity, is troubling the priestly class as a whole. It is now fairly clear that religiosity of this kind was not for the sake of the people, but people were being used for the profit of religious establishments.

Unlike love, which is universal, faith is inherently parochial. Faith is exclusive to religious groups. Zeal for one's faith breeds hate and hostility to the faiths of others. It is this naiveté that custodians of religions breed and exploit to deadly effect.

The priestly class can be trusted to import their agenda into the post-COVID era. It is in the interest of humanity that they be not allowed to do this. A new age needs a new spiritual vision. That vision has to be informed by

the godly attributes of love, truth, justice and compassion. The priestly class has no use for these values. They are incompatible with priestly interests. The new world cannot live on their regressive menu from the past. It is spirituality, not religion, that humankind in the new world needs.

The virus has undermined every aspect of priest-driven religiosity. Temples, mosques and churches are closed. Most people do not miss them! The tinkling of coins is no longer heard in sanctuaries, and that does not seem to upset gods. The communal nexus between religion and politics stands paralysed. Post-COVID, religion must be God-centred and priest-free, unburdened with places of worship. Worship, free from rituals, dogmas, deception and priestly hypocrisy, must nourish life. Worship must be to spiritual life what breathing is to physical life. Just as there are no middlemen in our breathing — except the deadly middleman of pollution — in the spiritual breathing of worship too, there must be no middlemen.

The emphasis must shift from salvation to social justice, from piety to peace, from rituals to human development, from divisive faith to universal love. Humanity must be free at last to recognise the God of justice who has no favourites or special agents.

Agnivesh is a Vedic scholar and social activist and Thampu was principal of St Stephen's College, Delhi

JUNE 30, 1980, FORTY YEARS AGO

SANJAY'S PLANE

THE CRASH OF THE Pitts S-2A aircraft, in which Sanjay Gandhi and Captain Subhash Saxena were killed, could not have been due to engine failure. Investigations so far have revealed that the propellers were rotating when the plane hit the ground. This conclusion was drawn from the nature of the damage caused to the propellers. Authoritative sources said that the body of the wrecked aircraft was being separately examined from the engine at the technical centre of the DGCA. The right side of the aircraft had been severely damaged, while the left was almost intact. This means the aircraft had taken a turn towards

the right as it crashed. The sources said experts had also ruled out “fatigue” as a possible cause of the mishap as the aircraft was new and had flown only 10 hours.

TRIPURA VIOLENCE

TWO PERSONS WERE killed following a spurt of violence and arson by groups of miscreants at Kalyanpur village in Khowai sub-division of West Tripura, according to the latest police reports in Agartala. One person was killed when the army fired one round to disperse two warring groups, while another was killed by miscreants who set on fire 25 houses of the tribals and five huts of the non-tribals at the

village. The police said agitated tribals in retaliation set ablaze 50 huts of the non-tribals. Official sources said altogether 104 persons had been arrested.

AFGHAN MUTINY

Reliable nonaligned diplomatic sources confirmed that an Afghan armoured division mutinied nine days ago at a base about 20 kilometres east of Kabul. A Kabul report reaching New Delhi on Friday said that Afghan army mutineers had killed 10 Soviet troops in an encounter following the rebellion. However, sources here said the embassy's account did not cite casualties.



THE IDEAS PAGE

Diplomacy after Galwan

At a time when most of the world is finding it hard to stand up against pressures from Beijing, Indian resistance to China's expansionism would be a definitive moment in Asia's geopolitical evolution



C RAJAMOHAN

THERE IS A general consensus in Delhi that the Galwan encounter has produced a discontinuity in India's China policy. Sceptics might say such generalisations made in the aftermath of a bloody encounter tend to overstate the prospects of change. They would add that structural constraints would limit dramatic changes in policy once the heat of the moment dissipates.

This emphasis on inertia must be set against reality that the Galwan clash comes amidst the deepening crisis in bilateral relations over the last decade. Stalled boundary talks, a widening trade deficit, the clash of national interests in the region, and Chinese opposition to India's global aspirations have together strained Sino-Indian relations. Galwan is the last straw, the argument goes, that broke the camel's back.

Although both propositions are rooted in reality, the potential direction of the Sino-Indian relationship is likely to depend on how the current military confrontation in Ladakh is resolved. If it ends with a quick return to the status quo that prevailed in April, inertia is likely to limit radical policy departures. If the Ladakh crisis ends in a setback for India, the pressure on Delhi to radically reorient its China policy will mount.

Meanwhile, if the military standoff continues, as it looks likely, Delhi will have to fully prepare itself. Strengthening India's military and political hand against China in that confrontation is the immediate objective of Delhi's post-Galwan diplomacy.

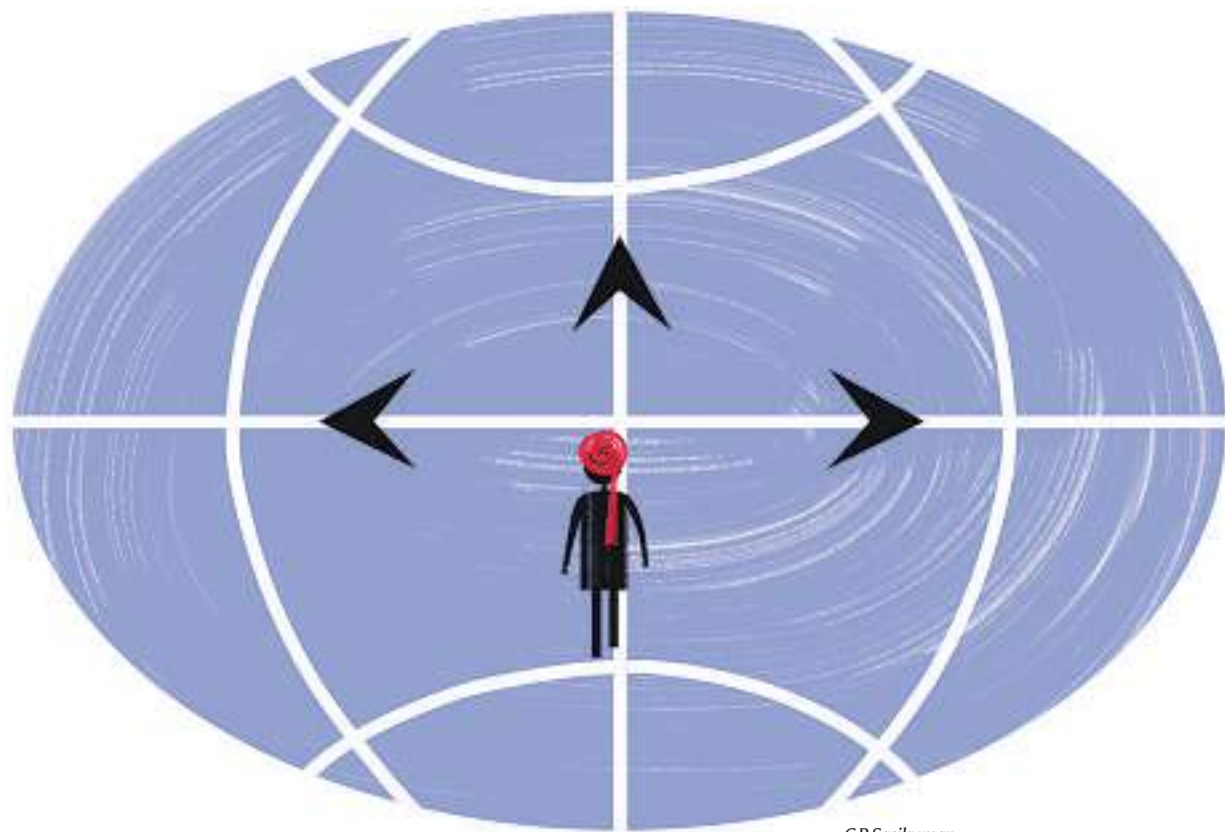
Many analysts point to India's massive power asymmetry with China and the need to bridge it. The steps suggested include the construction of a military alliance with the US and other Western partners as well as economic decoupling and diversification. Most of these steps are for the long-term.

The focus of the government is rightly on the short-term. And it is about being able to stare down the Chinese in the current military confrontation and hold its ground. Delhi is unlikely to forget those who stand by India at this juncture.

While most analysts were talking about the prospects for India's military embrace of America, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh dashed to Moscow last week. This was about ensuring that Russia will supply the spare parts and additional weapons like fighter aircraft that India needs.

Three decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union, India's dependence on Russian arms remains substantive. Rajnath's visit to Moscow amidst the crisis with China underlines the weight of the past in India's security policy. Delhi is also apparently pressing other major defence suppliers of India, including France and Israel, to accelerate deliveries on contracted defence equipment.

Meanwhile, the US has emerged as a major defence partner of India. The US aircraft flying on the Ladakh frontier these days include the C-130 transport aircraft as well as the Chinook and Apache helicopters. To be sure, American salience in Indian defence will continue to grow in the coming years. But let's not go too far from the near-term.



C R Sasikumar

There have been reports from Russia, that China is pressing Moscow not to sell the new fighter aircraft to India. Russia and China are strong strategic partners today. While the past suggests India has a special claim to Russian affections, there is a Sino-Russian strategic cohabitation today in opposition to America.

Both Russia and China have been grumbling about India's growing warmth towards the US in the last few years. How Russia responds to India's request for support in this confrontation with China will, of course, have a major bearing on the future evolution of Delhi's ties with Moscow.

Unlike Russia's public stance of neutrality between India and China, Washington has come out in favour of Delhi. If US President Donald Trump's remarks on mediation between India and China were irritating, Delhi also notes the vocal public support of the US defence and foreign policy establishment against Chinese aggression.

Far more important than the statements is the material support that the US is prepared to give and India is ready to accept during the crisis. Media reports from Delhi say the US is already supplying valuable real-time military intelligence of value to the Indian armed forces. Washington is apparently willing to do more but is letting Delhi decide the pace and intensity of that cooperation.

But to talk of a military alliance with America is getting way ahead of the story. Such chatter underestimates the uncertain political moment in the US amidst the general election scheduled for early November. The electoral fortunes of Joe Biden are rising as the Trump Administration struggles to manage the COVID crisis. A change of guard in Washington may not necessarily change attitudes towards India, but will certainly slow things down as the new administration settles down and reviews its priorities.

In any event, alliance arrangements are not there just for the asking in Washington, whether it is dominated by Republicans or Democrats. Even more important, America's stakes in China are far higher than Russia's. While there is growing strategic

Both Russia and China have been grumbling about India's growing warmth towards the US in the last few years. How Russia responds to India's request for support in this confrontation with China will, of course, have a major bearing on the future evolution of Delhi's ties with Moscow.

friction between Washington and Beijing, their profound economic interdependence is a significant political constraint on the US's options.

For now, though, Delhi appreciates the level of support it has got from the US. America and other Western friends of India had helped Delhi fend off efforts of Beijing and Islamabad to involve the UN Security Council in Kashmir's affairs after India changed the constitutional status of the region last August.

On deeper military cooperation with Washington, Delhi would want to move with care rather than rush into it in the manner that Jawaharlal Nehru did during the 1962 war. While Delhi is in a better position today than it was in 1962, China's capabilities and standing have grown manifold since then.

China today is the world's second-most important power and a valued political and economic partner for most countries in the world. Very few capitals would want to insert themselves into the conflict between India and China. And Delhi should not waste its diplomatic capital in seeking public expressions of support from around the world.

If Delhi comes out of this crisis wounded, its troubles at home and the world will mount significantly. A weakened India will find recasting its China policy even harder. But an India that comes out of this confrontation with its head held high, will find its international political stock rising and its options on China expanding.

At a time when most of the world is finding it hard to stand up against relentless political, economic and military pressures from Beijing, successful Indian resistance to China's expansionism would be a definitive moment in the geopolitical evolution of Asia. The stakes for India and the world, then, are far higher today than in 1962.

The writer is director, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore and contributing editor on international affairs for The Indian Express

Spending our way out

Infrastructure bonds floated by a development finance institution could aid a quicker recovery



JANAK PRIYANI AND RAAG HARIA

THE COVID-19 pandemic has brought global economic activity to a virtual halt. While the world was long expecting a recession, the pandemic has pulled the trigger. The IMF estimates the global economy to contract by -4.9 per cent this year and the cloud to deepen should the virus not recede in the latter half of 2020. As for the Indian economy, growth has been decelerating for the past eight quarters, and indications by the RBI suggest that growth is contracting for the first time in four decades. While the recently announced economic package provides much-needed near-term liquidity support and long-pending structural reforms aiming towards medium-to-long-term stability, we must address the elephant in the room — the need to further aid a demand recovery. As the economy begins to reopen, we explore the components of aggregate demand and explain why government expenditure is perhaps the only component that can aid growth going forward.

Keynesian theory suggests that for aggregate demand to increase, at least one of the components of GDP needs to expand. Growth in the Indian economy has been dominated by consumption (PFCE), followed by investments (GFCF), government expenditure (GFCE) and net exports (NEX). However, consumption and investment demand have been subdued for the past few quarters, dragging down overall growth.

These two components were perhaps casualties of a sharp deceleration in credit supply even after an impressive bank cleanup exercise by the government and RBI. The IL&FS debacle in September 2018 only made matters worse. The NBFC sector, which played an important role in fuelling India's consumption growth, suffered from funding crunches leading to a further squeeze in credit supply, thereby impacting consumption demand. This deceleration is likely to exacerbate going forward, with estimates suggesting that PFCE will grow at its slowest pace in 15 years.

While the government and RBI have taken impressive strides to ensure adequate liquidity, uncertain economic prospects provide little comfort for bankers to lend further. Even though we may see the release of some pent-up consumption, industry-wide job/pay-cuts with a growing sense of uncertainty over the future may limit spending to non-discretionary items and force people towards precautionary savings.

A similar cause for worry is the declining rate of investments. Broad-based utilisation levels, as represented by the RBI, dropped to 68.6 per cent in Q3FY20, well below the 75 per cent benchmark for new capacity addition, implying suboptimal levels of fresh investments. A higher rate of investments is essential for sustainable economic growth. The deteriorating economic scenario and increasing levels of debt with rating downgrades for industries are likely to aggravate

existing problems. With utilisation levels at historic lows and significant hurdles in raising new capital, any new capacity addition in the near future looks highly unlikely.

Global trade has been undergoing several disruptions since 2009. Heightened trade tensions between the US and China, with the onset of the pandemic, only make matters worse. Global trade, as monitored by CPB, witnessed its steepest decline since 2009, falling by -4.3 per cent in March over the previous year, with only downside risks from hereon. As for India, our limited share in global trade along with a battered domestic and global outlook provides little room for exports to contribute towards growth.

Lastly, government expenditure is the only exogenously determined element in a Keynesian framework. The positive push required to aid a demand recovery has to come through the government, seeing as there is limited room for consumption, trade or investments to expand significantly. However, with sparse resources that India has, we must deploy funds that yield a higher return. One key area that can provide the necessary support is infrastructure investment. A study by S&P Global estimates 1 per cent of GDP spend on infrastructure can boost real growth by 2 per cent while creating 1.3 million direct jobs. Historically, countries have used infrastructure to provide counter-cyclical support to the economy. Some of the most remarkable references are the New Deal in the US, Germany's expansion post-WWII debt reduction (1953) and more recently financial crisis in the wake of the Global Financial Crisis. Reports suggest that China is sticking to the same strategy this time around with nearly \$600 billion worth of special bonds, it is again looking towards infrastructure to revive growth.

Notably, infrastructure has strong links to growth and with both supply and demand-side features that help generate employment and long-term assets. India already has an upper hand here. Front-loading key projects with greater visibility from the recently announced National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) could aid in a quicker recovery. How do we do this? India already has several institutions for infrastructure development purposes from the likes of IIFCL, IRFC to more recently NIIIF. However, over these years, their scale and functioning have remained inadequate. Perhaps, a relook, to restructure these into one large development institution could help reduce inefficiencies and allow for greater leverage.

Taking a cue from China, floating special infrastructure bonds through this organisation to accelerate the funding of the NIP could aid a speedier recovery. Further, taking a page from the New Deal and its Reconstruction Finance Corporation, this institution's ability for greater leverage can be used to make amends to our credit channels as well as the development of state government and urban local body bond markets. This could help businesses and bankers overcome risk aversion and bring back trust in the system while financing new paths for growth.

At a time when liquidity is ample and the cost is low, borrowing shouldn't be so scary. The exogenous component could step-in in a greater way, perhaps because, it is the only one that can.

The writers are part of the Economics & Finance team at NITI Aayog. Views are personal



ANIL DHARKER

The statue toppling spree

It's pointless to fight the past. It's today's evils which need to be battled

A FEW DAYS ago, two 30-year-olds (a man and a woman) climbed to the top of Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square and put a mask over Nelson's face. They were members of Greenpeace, taking advantage of the chaos around them to garner free publicity for their anti-pollution campaign. The upheaval all around was caused by the frenzy of the Topple the Racists brigade, which took off in London from the Black Lives Matter movement in the US. In its seven years of existence, BLM has also demanded the removal of statues but without the hooliganism seen in London.

The recent outpouring of anger in the US has been caused by George Floyd's murder by a white policeman, but racism in that country's judicial system and police department has been rampant for years and seems to have been institutionalised. Minneapolis, Minnesota — where Floyd was killed — is notoriously bad with its police force getting "warrior style" training. Just one set of figures tells the whole story: African-Americans comprise 13 per cent of the US adult population but make up 33 per cent of the imprisoned population. There are obviously other factors responsible for this imbalance, but racism is the primary one. That also shows up in the startlingly different rates of convictions and acquittals for whites and blacks. It goes back to the US Constitution of 1789, which defined a citizen as "a free white man". There were even

lynching laws, which regulated how lynchings could or could not be carried out.

The statues that the Black Lives Matter movement have been agitating to remove are mainly of Robert E Lee, the Confederacy's most honoured general and other Civil War heroes of the deep South. Wouldn't their removal be considered an attempt to erase history? In normal circumstances, yes. However, the important point is that a great number of these statues were erected in the late 19th century, at the start of the 20th century and in the 1950s when civil rights movements were gaining strength. The timing is important: These weren't commemorative statues; they were put up to intimidate the black population by reminding it of its past.

The London protest had no immediate provocation. Topple the Racists is a good slogan but it ignores the first lesson of history, that of presentism — interpreting past events in terms of modern values and concepts. Most of the targets of the topplers have some connection with slavery. But however abhorrent slavery is to us now, it was an accepted practice from the earliest known records in Sumer to the time of ancient Rome and Greece and for Incas and Aztecs. There was debt slavery, slavery as punishment for crime, and enslavement of prisoners of war. As for the truly inhuman slave trade, we know about the Atlantic slave trade in the west because it has been well doc-

umented, but there was a flourishing trade the other way too with the Ottoman and Arab slave trades. Many African slaves were brought to India generally to be inducted into the militia. Slavery in the west was abolished as recently as 1833 in England and 1865 in the US — in human history, that's only a short time ago.

Admiral Nelson died in 1805 after his inspired leadership and unconventional tactics defeated the combined French and Spanish fleets. Nelson's column, erected in 1840, celebrates that triumph. Without that decisive victory, the history of England may have been entirely different. Do the agitators think about that, or do they only think of Nelson's anti-abolitionist attitude? Similar short-sightedness prevails for most of the 78 statues that are the targets of the Topple the Racists campaign: The statue of Thomas Guy (1644-1724) stands outside Guy's hospital, which he founded. He made his fortune from a company that sold slaves, but his hospital saved lives. The statue of Robert Milligan (1746-1809) was quietly removed to foil agitators; it had been placed outside the West India Docks because he was responsible for the dock's construction. The statue of Edward Colston (1636-1731) was thrown by protestors into the Avon river; they didn't see that he had been a philanthropist and a major benefactor of Bristol city. They only saw him and Milligan as slave owners, but they were hardly unique in that

respect during those times.

Other targets include imperialists like Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902) and Winston Churchill (1874-1965). Imperialism isn't dead yet, but at one point no great power could resist the temptation to colonise. So, why is Rhodes a villain? The Rhodes statue commemorates the scholarship he set up at Oxford University. As for Churchill, he's a national hero, the man who saved Britain from Hitler.

The topplers have others on their list including Christopher Columbus (for "colonising" America), Lord Mountbatten (for Partition) and even Mahatma Gandhi (attitude to Africans). While we are on this new shaming spree, why not add some more revered names? Like Aristotle (theory of natural slavery), Homer (slavery as an inevitable consequence of war) and Plato (slaves have a deficiency of reason). All this will lead to completely vapid political correctness, shut out debate and stop us from looking objectively at our shared history.

No one now can possibly say that imperialism was good and ethical, but we can't avoid the fact that it was there and is a part of human history. So is slavery and the horrors attached to it. It's pointless to fight the past. It's the evils of today which have to be battled into the ground.

Dharker is a writer and columnist

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BE INCLUSIVE

This refers to the editorial, 'Kartarpur bridge' (IE, June 29). The pilgrimage corridor is an excellent opportunity for New Delhi to bank on soft diplomacy with the Western neighbour in these tough times. Cultural contacts and people-to-people interactions serve as a magic potion to repair bruised ties among world nations.

Anjali Bhavana, Thiruvananthapuram

PROBE NEEDED

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Two weeks ago, several alleged torture by same TN police officers, 1 died' (IE, June 29). The Thoothukudi district judge's report of "custodial torture" to the Madras High Court indicates wanton human rights violations by the police. Instead of taking the issue seriously, the state information minister became hyper-technical by saying that deaths are not custodial because "they died in judicial custody, two days after their remand". A probe must expose the guilty and officials who overlooked the crime.

L R Murmu, Delhi

ART MATTERS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Mona Lisa with a mask' (IE, June 29). Art has suffered during the pandemic. Various museums, galleries and theatres will now

IDEAS ONLINE

ONLY IN THE EXPRESS

BOLSTER INFORMAL WORKFORCE: SHAKTI SINHA AND MADHAV PAI

TACKLING AIR POLLUTION AFTER COVID: SAGNIK DEY AND JOSHUA APTE

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open, hoping that visitors and patrons will return. We must not forget different forms of art kept us lively and engaged during the stringent lockdown.

Ayushi Singh, Agra

POLICE LAPSES

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'HC rejected, Delhi police repeated: bail will send adverse message to society' (IE, June 28). Delhi High Court's comment that "Prison is primarily for punishing convicts; not for detaining undertrials in order to send any 'message' to society" is appreciable. The police should act judiciously without any pressure.

Anil Kumar Jain, Jaipur

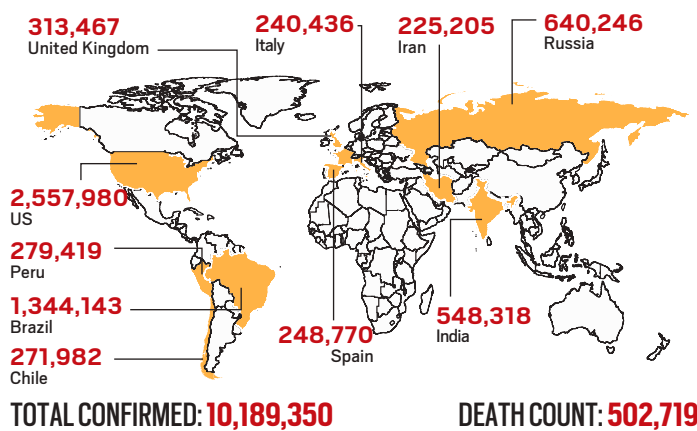


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If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

CORONAVIRUS DASHBOARD

THE WORLD



Source: Johns Hopkins University, updated at 11 pm on June 29. JHU's India tally and Health Ministry's tally (below) may not match as these are accounted at different times.

Lessons from immune response of most severe Covid patients

A NEW study has found that even the sickest Covid-19 patients produce T cells that help fight the virus. T cells are a key component of the immune system and their roles include killing infected host cells, activating other immune cells, and regulating the immune response. The study cites its findings as further evidence that a Covid-19 vaccine (whenever developed) will need to elicit T cells to work alongside antibodies.

The new research was published in the journal *Science Immunology* on Friday.

The researchers followed 10 severely ill Covid-19 patients who were on ventilators at Erasmus University Medical Center, Netherlands. Two of the patients eventually died. An in-depth look at their immune system responses showed that all 10 patients produced T cells that targeted the SARS-CoV-2 virus. These T cells worked alongside antibodies in trying to clear the virus and stopping the infection.

The researchers note that these findings are in line with a recent study, published in *Cell*, that showed a robust T cell response in individuals with moderate cases of Covid-19. In both

studies, the T cells in these patients prominently targeted the "spike" protein on SARS-CoV-2, according to La Jolla Institute for Immunology, researchers from which are involved in both studies. It is the spike protein that the coronavirus uses to enter human cells. The new study adds to growing evidence that the spike protein is a promising target. According to La Jolla, it also confirms that the immune system can also mount strong responses to other targets on the virus.

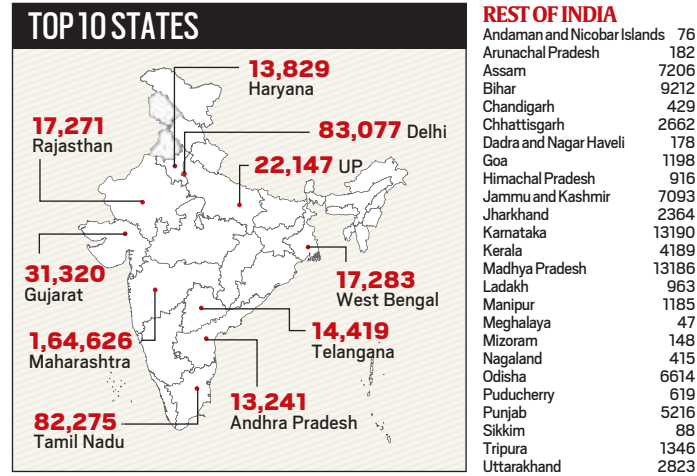
"This is good news for those making a vaccine using spike, and it also suggests new avenues to potentially increase vaccine potency," researcher Daniela Weiskopf, first author of the new study, said in a statement.

While the *Cell* paper followed San Diego residents, the new paper follows Dutch patients—and the T cell responses were consistent in both populations. "This study is important because it shows this immune response in patients thousands of miles apart. The same observation has now been strongly reproduced in different continents and different studies," Weiskopf said.

Source: La Jolla Institute for Immunology



INDIA COUNT: 5,48,318 (16,475 DEATHS)



Union Health Ministry update as of 11 pm, June 29. Some states may have reported higher numbers. Only states/UTs with at least one case listed above. **3,21,723 PATIENTS DISCHARGED IN 35 STATES AND UNION TERRITORIES**

Have a question on the COVID-19 outbreak and what you should/should not do? Write to explained@indianexpress.com

SIMPLY PUT

Reading the draft EIA norms

Extended by only 20 days, the window for public feedback to the draft Environment Impact Assessment Notification 2020 closes today. A look at the changes proposed in the norms, and why these bother activists

JAY MAZOOMDAAR
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

THE COVID-19 emergency delayed the publication of the draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification 2020 in the Gazette by 19 days. So, when thousands emailed to seek an extension to the mandatory 60-day window for public feedback, the Environment Ministry top brass thought it fit to allow another 60 days until August 10.

But, as reported by *The Indian Express*, Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar set the new deadline on June 30, limiting the extension to only 20 days. It did not go down well with activists who have been pushing for the draft's withdrawal altogether. Far from an improvement, the 2020 draft, they claim, is a regressive departure from the 2006 version it seeks to replace.

Background

A signatory to the Stockholm Declaration (1972) on Environment, India enacted laws to control water (1974) and air (1981) pollution soon after. But it was only after the Bhopal gas leak disaster in 1984 that the country legislated an umbrella Act for environmental protection in 1986.

Under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, India notified its first EIA norms in 1994, setting in place a legal framework for regulating activities that access, utilise, and affect (pollute) natural resources. Every development project has been required to go through the EIA process for obtaining prior environmental clearance ever since.

The 1994 EIA notification was replaced with a modified draft in 2006. Earlier this year, the government redrafted it again to incorporate the amendments and relevant court orders issued since 2006, and to make the EIA "process more transparent and expedient."

The contention

Though established to safeguard the environment, the EIA process, argue activists, often achieved the opposite by offering a façade of legal paperwork for a range of *de facto* concessions enjoyed by industries.

For example, reports on projects' potential (damaging) impact on the environment — the bedrock of the EIA process — are frequently shoddy and consultant agencies that prepare those reports for a fee are rarely held accountable. Lack of administrative capacity to ensure compliance often renders long lists of clearance conditions meaningless. Then there are periodic amendments



Open cast coal mining at Assam's Dehing Patkai Elephant Reserve, which has been at the centre of recent protests by environment activists. Debojit Moran

exempting one category of industries or the other from scrutiny.

On the other hand, developers complain that the EIA regime dampened the spirit of liberalisation, leading to red tape and rent-seeking. Delay in project clearance during the UPA-II rule became an election issue in 2014 when then prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi hit out at the Congress by claiming that files did not move in the Environment Ministry till "Jayanthi tax" was paid.

Red flags

The 2020 draft offers no remedy for the political and bureaucratic stronghold on the EIA process, and thereby on industries. Instead, it proposes to bolster the government's discretionary power while limiting public engagement in safeguarding the environment.

While projects concerning national defence and security are naturally considered strategic, the government gets to decide on the "strategic" tag for other projects. The 2020 draft says no information on "such projects shall be placed in the public domain". This opens a window for summary clearance for any project deemed strategic without

having to explain why.

Additionally, the new draft exempts a long list of projects from public consultation. For example, linear projects such as roads and pipelines in border areas will not require any public hearing. The 'border area' is defined as "area falling within 100 kilometres aerial distance from the Line of Actual Control with bordering countries of India." That would cover much of the Northeast, the repository of the country's richest biodiversity.

What's exempt

All inland waterways projects and expansion/widening of national highways — two focus areas of the government and championed by Nitin Gadkari, the minister in charge of the sectors concerned — will be exempt from prior clearance. These include roads that cut through forests and dredging of major rivers.

The 2020 draft also exempts most building construction projects of built-up area up to 1,50,000 sq m. This is a reiteration of the Environment Ministry's December 2016 notification that was set aside by the National Green Tribunal in December 2017. The gov-

ernment subsequently moved the Supreme Court but did not get any relief.

The big shift

The two most significant changes in the new draft are the provisions for post-facto project clearance and abandoning the public trust doctrine. Projects operating in violation of the Environment Act will now be able to apply for clearance. It is a reiteration of a March 2017 notification for projects operating without clearance.

All a violator will need are two plans for remediation and resource augmentation corresponding to 1.5-2 times "the ecological damage assessed and economic benefit derived due to violation". For such late applications, a developer will have to cough up Rs 2,000-10,000 per day for the period of delay. Consider the impact of this penalty on, say, an illegal sand miner who takes out several truckloads every day.

In an order on April 1, the Supreme Court held "ex post facto environmental clearances" contrary to law. It said: "Environment law cannot countenance the notion of an ex post facto clearance. This would be contrary to both the precautionary principle as well as the need for sustainable development."

The 2020 draft also spells out how the government will take cognisance of such violations. It has to be reported either by a government authority or the developers themselves. There is no scope for any public complaint about violations. Instead, the reliance is on the violators to disclose, *suo motu*, that they broke the law.

Legal question

An EIA notification is issued under Section 3 of the Environment Protection Act, 1986, to impose restrictions on setting up new projects or expansion or modernisation of existing projects. The section stipulates that such measures must benefit the environment.

In the April 1 order, the Supreme Court also said: "For an action of the Central government to be treated as a measure referable to Section 3, it must satisfy the statutory requirement of being necessary or expedient for the purpose of protecting and improving the quality of the environment and preventing, controlling and abating environment pollution".

As the window for public feedback to the 2020 draft closes on Tuesday, its various provisions aimed at facilitating the government's doctrine of "ease of doing business" keep open the question if the notification is aligned to the purpose of the Environment Act. The last is yet to be heard on its legal validity.

Ban on Tik Tok, etc: why, how, what now

India, security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States or public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of any cognizable offence relating to above, it may... by order, direct any agency of the Government or intermediary to block for access by the public or cause to be blocked for access by the public any information generated, transmitted, received, stored or hosted in any computer resource."

The Ministry of Information and Technology has said that it "has received many complaints from various sources including several reports about misuse of some mobile apps... for stealing and surreptitiously transmitting users' data in an unauthorised manner to servers which have locations outside India". Since this "ultimately impinges upon the sovereignty and integrity of India, is a matter of very deep and immediate concern which requires emergency

measures", it has said.

How will the ban be enforced?

The notification is expected to be followed by instructions to Internet service providers to block these apps. Users are likely to soon see a message saying access to the apps has been restricted on the request of the government.

However, while this will impact apps like TikTok and UC News that need a live feed to serve any purpose, users might still be able to continue using apps that don't need an active Internet connection to be used. But further downloads of these apps, like CamScanner, are likely to be blocked on Google's Play Store and Apple's App Store.

What will be the impact of the ban?

Some apps on the banned list are very popular in India, especially TikTok, which has over 100 million active users in the country, mainly

in the heartland. New social media platforms like Helo and Likee, as well as video chat app Bigo Live, are immensely popular among Indians who are not comfortable in English. These users will have to look for substitutes.

Also, most of these platforms have Indian creators, for many of whom this is the only source of income. Many of these apps have offices and employees in India, and a few thousand jobs could be at stake.

Will the ban be permanent?

TikTok was banned in India on the order of the Madras High Court for a few days last year, but it came back soon after the court vacated the ban. The action this time, however, is more sweeping, impacts more apps, and has been taken in a specific strategic and national security context. It could be a warning to bigger Chinese businesses in India, and to China itself.

What is Balochistan Liberation Army, believed to be behind Karachi attack?

NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN
MUMBAI, JUNE 29

POSTED ON Twitter and other social media, a photograph stamped with the letters BLA, showing four armed men in camouflage, with a caption naming them and their "self-sacrificing attack" on the Pakistan Stock Exchange in Karachi on Monday, is being widely seen as a claim by the Balochistan Liberation Army for the attack.

What is BLA

The BLA is a Baloch secessionist militant group headed by Hyrbayair Marri, who is based in the UK. Pakistan has long accused India of backing Baloch separatists and militants, and also alleges an Afghan hand in it.

The men in the photo were identified in the caption as Tasleem Baloch alias Muslim, Shehzad Baloch alias Cobra, Salman Hammal alias Natak, and Siraj Kungur alias Yaagi, of the BLA's so-called Majeed Brigade, named after a BLA commander Abdul Majeed Baloch.

Monday's attack appears to have been foiled at the gates of the PSE. All four men

were shot dead by security forces. A policeman and two security guards are also reported to have died. The four attackers threw a grenade as they attempted to enter the complex. According to reports in the Pakistani media, they were carrying backpacks with food supplies and ammunition that seemed to suggest they were prepared for a long-drawn-out operation.

The two Karachi attacks

If indeed this is an attack by the BLA, as the claim appears to suggest, this is their second in Karachi, Pakistan's business capital and its largest city where the country's biggest port is located. It is also the capital of Sindh province. The previous terrorist attack in Karachi was in November 2018, when the BLA claimed a strike on the Chinese consulate in the city, killing four people — two visa applicants and two policemen. The three attackers were killed by security forces.

According to a report in December 2016 in *Dawn* newspaper, the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) sold 40 per cent strategic shares to a Chinese consortium comprising three Chinese exchanges — China Financial

Futures Exchange Company Limited (lead bidder), Shanghai Stock Exchange and Shenzhen Stock Exchange which bought 30pc of the strategic stock — and two local financial institutions — Pak-China Investment Company Limited and Habib Bank Limited, which bought 5 per cent each. The value of the transaction was \$85 million.

"The significant feature of the deal [is that it is the] first such sale of strategic interest in a bourse in the regional markets. Through the deal, the Chinese bourse has also made its first foray in an acquisition outside China," *Dawn* said at the time.

Pak and Chinese targets

Other Majeed Brigade/BLA attacks have targeted Pakistani government or Chinese targets in Balochistan province. A suicide bombing claimed by the group targeted pro-government Baloch politician Nasser Mengal at his home in Quetta in December 2011, killing 13 people. In August 2018, a suicide attack on a bus carrying Chinese engineers in Dalbandin in Balochistan caused injuries to three Chinese nationals.

Last year, in a widely shared video on so-



The Pakistan Stock Exchange building in Karachi, reflected in a bullet-riddled window. Reuters

cial media, a purported member of the "Majeed Brigade" is heard warning Chinese President Xi Jinping to "get out of Balochistan". A man wearing military fatigues and a black cloth over his face says: "President Xi Jinping, you still have time to get out of Balochistan or you will witness a retaliation from Baloch sons and daughters

you will never forget".

The video came soon after an attack by the "Majeed Brigade" at a five-star hotel in Gwadar, where Chinese delegations usually stay. Eight people, including four hotel employees, a soldier and the three attackers, were killed.

In another video on YouTube, a former leader of the Majeed Brigade, "General" Aslam Baloch, alleges that the Chinese government is helping Pakistan security forces fight Baloch militants by providing them with spying equipment. He also alleged that the Chinese are building military bases along the Balochistan coast.

In a brief on the Majeed Brigade, the Pakistan Institute of Conflict & Security Studies, headed by former High Commissioner to India Abdul Basit, says a training video of the group seems to suggest it is based in Afghanistan. It says "targeting Chinese interests is the prime task given to Majeed Brigade by BLA leadership".

China is developing Gwadar Port in Balochistan as a key link in its Belt and Road Initiative. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor, that begins at Khunjerab Pass in

Gilgit Baltistan ends at Gwadar. It is envisioned as China's superhighway to the oil-fields of the Middle East.

Baloch secessionism

Hyrbayair Marri, who is said to lead the BLA, is the son of Khair Baksh Marri, the late head of the Marri, the largest Baloch tribe, and seen by the Pakistan security establishment as part of an axis of anti-Pakistan tribal chieftains, along with Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti and Sardar Ataullah Mengal. Marri, who died in 2014, was a Baloch nationalist, and spent years in exile in Afghanistan.

Militant Baloch secessionism is low intensity guerrilla warfare that has never gained critical mass except for a brief period in the 1970s, primarily because Balochistan is a thinly populated province. Some secessionists speak of Greater Balochistan, which also includes Iran's Sistan-Baluchistan province.

PICSS says in its brief that BLA is funded by Afghanistan and India, as well as by wealthy Baloch businessmen living abroad, and that Hyrbayair Marri "enjoys the patronage of anti-Pakistan forces"

TOP OF THE WORLD



Francois Fillon got a 5-year sentence, with 3 years suspended

FRANCE

Ex-PM Fillon sentenced to jail for corruption

Paris: A French court on Monday sentenced former Prime Minister Francois Fillon to five years in jail, three of them suspended, for embezzling public funds in a scandal that wrecked his 2017 run for president. The court also found Fillon's wife, Penelope, guilty for her role in the scam that saw her receive about 1 million euros for minimal work as her husband's assistant. She received a suspended three-year sentence. In a scathing ruling, the chief judge said Fillon, 66, eroded public trust in the political class as a result of paying his wife a salary that was disproportionate.

USA

Top court strikes down Louisiana abortion clinic law

THE US Supreme Court on Monday struck down a Louisiana law regulating abortion clinics, reasserting a commitment to abortion rights over fierce opposition from dissenting conservative justices in the first big abortion case of the Trump era. Chief Justice John Roberts joined with his four more liberal colleagues in ruling that the law requiring doctors who perform abortions have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals violates the abortion right the court first announced in the landmark Roe v. Wade decision in 1973. In two previous abortion cases, Roberts had favoured restrictions.

FRANCE

Auction of African artifacts to go ahead in Paris

A NIGERIAN commission has called for the cancellation of Monday's auction in Paris of sacred Nigerian statues that it alleges were stolen. Christie's auction house has defended the sale, saying the artworks were legitimately acquired and the sale will go ahead. In recent years, French courts have consistently ruled in favor of auction houses whose sales of sacred objects, such as Hopi tribal masks, were contested by rights groups and representatives of the tribes. A Princeton scholar, professor Chike Okeke-Agulu, alongside Nigeria's Commission for Museums and Monuments, had raised alarm that the objects were looted during the Biafran war.

ALL FOUR ASSAILANTS GUNNED DOWN

7 killed in attack on Karachi stock exchange, India slams Pak charges

Islamabad hints at Indian role, Delhi rejects 'absurd' claim; Baloch-linked group claims responsibility

PTI & ENS

KARACHI, NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

FOUR HEAVILY armed militants, believed to be from a banned Baloch terror group, on Monday made a brazen attempt to take over the Pakistan Stock Exchange building here, killing four security guards and a police officer before being shot dead by security forces.

Hours later, Pakistan hinted at India hand in the attacks, triggering a sharp reaction from Delhi. As Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi talked about "externally supported terrorism", New Delhi rejected the comments as "absurd". Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said, "Pakistan cannot shift the blame on India for its domestic problems."

The militants, who arrived in a car and were armed with automatic machine guns, grenades and explosives, tried to storm the Pakistan Stock Exchange through a parking lot, opening indiscriminate fire and lobbing grenades, but were stopped from entering the multi-storey building. Two civilians were among those killed in the attack. The Balochistan Liberation



At the site of the attack in Karachi on Monday. Reuters

Army (BLA)-linked Majeed Brigade claimed responsibility for the attack. Banned in Pakistan, the UK and US, the separatist group was also behind the Pearl Continental Hotel attack in Gwadar, Balochistan, last year in which eight people were killed. A senior official of the Counter-Terrorism Department said one of the killed militants was identified as Salman, who hails from the restive Balochistan province. Deputy Superintendent of

Police (South) Jamil Ahmed said, "They lobbed hand grenades and opened fire initially at the compound entrance to force themselves in, but one of them was killed immediately and that set them back." None of the four managed to enter the main trading hall or building and trading went on even during the attack, Ahmed said.

The Director General, Rangers, Sindh, Major-General Omer Ahmed Bokhari, addressing a

press conference in Karachi, said the attackers intended to not only enter the building but also hold people hostage. "Every terrorist was armed with weapons that included AK-47s, hand grenades, rocket launchers. They were also carrying food and water," he said.

He said the attack bore the hallmark of the siege by the BLA of the Chinese Consulate in Karachi in November 2018, which had led to the death of two.

He added, "The (stock exchange) is an important symbol of economic activity... It was an attempt to send a message to the world that Pakistan is not safe. They wanted to damage Pakistan's economic activity and harm investors' confidence."

The stock exchange building is situated on 11 Chundrigar Road, also known as Pakistan's Wall Street, in Karachi's high-security commercial hub. The area houses the Pakistan state bank as well as the headquarters of national and international financial institutions.

The Karachi stock exchange is Pakistan's largest and oldest. Usually there are more than 6,000 employees working in the compound. Pakistan Stock Exchange Managing Director Farrukh Khan said "the number

of people was lower than normal today as many people are still staying home due to Covid-19".

A spokesperson for the BLA said they had carried out the attack to target Pakistan's economy, which was "built on exploitation of Balochistan's resources for decades".

It said the attack was also meant as a message to China, which holds about 40% equity in the Pakistan Stock Exchange through the Shanghai stock exchange. The BLA has vocally opposed China's infrastructure investments in the province.

Speaking to Pakistan's Samaa TV, Foreign Minister Qureshi said some elements want to disturb peace in Pakistan. "If the BLA has claimed responsibility for this attack, see where their links are," Qureshi said, seen as a reference to India.

In its statement, the MEA said, "Unlike Pakistan, India has no hesitation in condemning terrorism anywhere in the world, including in Karachi... Foreign Minister Qureshi may wish to reflect on this, as also his own government's position, including his Prime Minister's description of the global terrorist (Osama bin Laden) as a martyr."

Bomb, mortars kill 23 civilians in Afghanistan

ASSOCIATED PRESS

KABUL, JUNE 29

A CAR bombing and mortar shells fired at a busy market in southern Afghanistan's Helmand province on Monday killed 23 people, including children, a statement from a provincial governor's office said.

Both the Taliban and the Afghan military blame each other for the attack in Sangin district.

Details of the reported attack could not be independently confirmed as the area, which is under Taliban control, is remote and inaccessible to reporters.

The statement from the governor, General Mohammad Yasin, did not provide further details and there was no claim of responsibility for the attack.

A Taliban spokesman, Qari Yusouf Ahmadi, denied the insurgents were involved. The Taliban claimed the military fired mortars into the market.



FIGHT ERUPTS IN TAIWAN PARLIAMENT

Fighting erupted in Taiwan's Parliament on Monday as lawmakers from the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) broke through barricades erected by the main opposition Kuomintang (KMT) who had occupied it to protest against government "tyranny". Reuters

Iran issues warrant for Trump, goes to Interpol

ASSOCIATED PRESS

TEHRAN, JUNE 29

IRAN HAS issued an arrest warrant and asked Interpol for help in detaining US President Donald Trump and dozens of others it believes carried out the drone strike that killed a top Iranian general in Baghdad, a local prosecutor reportedly said on Monday.

While Trump faces no danger of arrest, the charges underscore the heightened tensions between Iran and the United States since Trump unilaterally withdrew America from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers.

Tehran prosecutor Ali Alqasimehr said Trump and more



The arrest warrant was issued against Trump over the drone attack that killed Iran's General Soleimani

than 30 others whom Iran accuses of involvement in the January 3 strike that killed Gen. Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad face "mur-

Why a 'red notice' is unlikely

IRAN HAS asked

Interpol to put out a "red notice" for Trump and more than 30 others it holds responsible for the killing of General Soleimani. Even if Interpol were to grant Iran's request, it doesn't have the power to force US police to arrest the President. Moreover, Interpol

is unlikely to put out a red notice for Trump as it could be deemed as going against its guidelines that forbid it from "undertaking any intervention or activities of a political" nature. However, an Interpol committee is likely to meet to discuss whether or not to grant Iran's request.

der and terrorism charges", the ISNA news agency reported.

Alqasimehr also was quoted as saying that Iran requested a

"red notice" be put out for Trump and the others, which represents the highest level arrest request issued by Interpol.



Gulnar Omirzakh, a Chinese-born ethnic Kazakh, says she was forced to get an intrauterine contraceptive, and that authorities threatened to detain her if she didn't pay a fine for giving birth to her third child. AP

major reason people are sent to detention camps, the AP found, with the parents of three or more ripped away from their families unless they can pay huge fines. Police raid homes, terrifying parents as they search for hidden children.

After Gulnar Omirzakh, a Chinese-born Kazakh, had her third child, the government ordered her to get an IUD inserted. Two years later, in January 2018,



Residents wait in line at a "community pot" in Lima, Peru. For many residents, the community pot is their only defence against a hunger that's become a constant feature of life amid the coronavirus pandemic. AP

Global coronavirus deaths top 500,000

US accounts for a quarter of the deaths

JANE WARDELL & CATE CADELL

SYDNEY, BEIJING, JUNE 29

THE DEATH toll from Covid-19 surpassed half a million people on Sunday, a grim milestone for the global pandemic that seems to be resurgent in some countries even as other regions are still grappling with the first wave.

The respiratory illness caused by the new coronavirus has been particularly dangerous for the elderly, although other adults and children are also among the 501,000 fatalities and 10.1 million reported cases.

While the overall rate of death has flattened in recent weeks, health experts have expressed concerns about record numbers of new cases in countries like the United States, India and Brazil, as well as new outbreaks in parts of Asia.

More than 4,700 people are dying every 24 hours from Covid-19-linked illness, according to Reuters calculations based on an average from June 1 to 27.

About one-quarter of all the deaths so far have been in the US. The recent surge in cases has been most pronounced in a handful of Southern and Western states that reopened earlier and more aggressively. US officials on Sunday reported around 44,700 new cases and 508 additional deaths. REUTERS



32 bodies were recovered after the incident on the river Buriganga in Dhaka on Monday. Reuters

At least 32 die as ferry capsizes in Bangladesh

ANISUR RAHMAN

DHAKA, JUNE 29

AT LEAST 32 people were drowned and many were missing on Monday when a ferry carrying over 100 passengers capsized in Buriganga river after it was hit by a bigger vessel in the Bangladeshi capital here, officials said.

"It appeared to be an accident caused by negligence of the drivers," an official of the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) told reporters.

Rescuers feared several passengers were trapped inside the ferry which sank at around 9.30

am with nearly 100 passengers on board in the Buriganga river along the Shyambazar area of Old Dhaka.

"Thirty two bodies have been retrieved so far. Search is on for the missing ones," the BIWTA official said. According to news channels, the victims include five women and two children. The victims are yet to be identified.

The ferry *Morning Bird* capsized after it was hit by another launch *Moyur-2* near the Sadarghat launch terminal.

Following the accident, the driver and other staff of *Moyur-2*, which was carrying some 1,000 passengers, left the scene and went into hiding, police said. PTI

AT THE SAME TIME, THE COUNTRY'S HAN MAJORITY HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED TO HAVE MORE CHILDREN

Amid crackdown in Xinjiang, China forces birth control on Uighurs

ASSOCIATED PRESS

JUNE 29

THE CHINESE government is taking draconian measures to slash birth rates among Uighurs and other minorities as part of a sweeping campaign to curb its Muslim population, even as it encourages some of the country's Han majority to have more children.

While individual women have spoken out before about

forced birth control, the practice is far more widespread and systematic than previously known, according to an AP investigation based on government statistics, state documents and interviews with 30 ex-detainees, family members and a former detention camp instructor. The campaign over the past four years in the far west region of Xinjiang is leading to what some experts are calling a form of "demographic genocide".

The state regularly subjects minority women to pregnancy checks, and forces intrauterine devices, sterilisation and even abortion on hundreds of thousands, the interviews and data show. Even while the use of IUDs and sterilisation has fallen nationwide, it is rising sharply in Xinjiang.

The population control measures are backed by mass detention both as a threat and as a punishment for failure to com-

15 ECONOMY

SENSEX: 34,961.52 ▼ 209.75 NIFTY: 10,312.40 ▼ 70.60 NIKKEI: 21,995.04 ▼ 517.04 HANG SENG: 24,301.28 ▼ 248.71 FTSE: 6,206.83 ▲ 47.53 DAX: 12,186.07 ▲ 96.68

International market data till 1900 IST

COVID IMPACT
THE FISC

How expenditure rationalisation is going to help govt dovetail stimulus package

AANCHAL MAGAZINE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

THE GOVERNMENT has extended its expenditure rationalisation for the second quarter of this fiscal, giving rise to concerns that it may end up spending lower than the budgeted levels, resulting in a long-drawn economic recovery.

Lower revenue stream and the rising debt levels of the central and state governments on account of enhanced borrowing to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic-related expenditure have led to concerns of the debt-GDP ratio breaching the notional red line of 80 per cent from the levels of 70 per cent of GDP seen last fiscal. The concerns are, however, being questioned by some economists who emphasise on the need to concentrate on economic revival and growth rather than being solely focussed on the debt numbers, with the economic costs of reining in debt being seen high in terms of unemployment and loss of lives and livelihood.

Why this expenditure rationalisation?

The Finance Ministry last week released guidelines for expenditure control in the July-September quarter, extending an earlier order dated April 8 for cash management system. The April order had categorised government departments and ministries into three categories, outlining their spending quota for the April-June quarter. Category A has ministries and departments such as Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Department of Health and Family Welfare, Department of Rural Development and Supreme Court of India with no restrictions. Ministries and departments in Category B such as those related to fertilizers, taxes, home affairs, election commission and road transport and highways are required to restrict expenditure within 20 per cent of the Budget estimate of 2020-21,

while those in Category C such as petrochemicals, coal, commerce, telecommunications, culture, housing and urban affairs can spend only 15 per cent of the Budget estimate.

The expenditure rationalisation is being done presumably to allow enough headroom to dovetail the stimulus package announced last month, especially as revenues are expected to be sharply lower than estimates this year.

What are the problems with limiting cash outgo?

The government's fiscal stimulus in the wake of the pandemic has been restrained with limited cash outgo. Schemes that were part of the stimulus package such as the distribution of funds to MSMEs under the 100 per cent Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme are struggling to take off, with banks man-

aging to disburse a little over 7 per cent of the amount earmarked under this head over the last one month.

Several rating agencies and economists have projected the debt-GDP ratio rising to 84-85 per cent of GDP. Even as debt sustainability and fiscal consolidation are always a matter of concern, some economists say holding down debt levels should not compromise on GDP growth, for which government expenditure is essential.

What are rating agencies likely to look out for?

The tight control over fiscal policy is being seen driven by the concerns of the debt levels, possibility of exceeding fiscal deficit target by a huge margin and consequent actions by rating agencies. More than the deficit, though, rating agencies are watching the deterioration of India's fiscal metrics in 'the context of a prolonged or deep slowdown in growth', which "would invite a ratings downgrade", as Moody's warned in a note on May 8. The effort to revive growth, thereby, is a more crucial metric, given all nations are bracing for a worsening of their deficit positions.

Full report on www.indianexpress.com

GOVT DEPARTMENTS HAVE STARTED CLEARING UP PENDING PAYMENTS

Over ₹3L cr dues, IBC changes add to MSMEs' liquidity woes

SUNNY VERMA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

RECENT CHANGES in the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), raising the threshold for invoking insolvency to Rs 1 crore from Rs 1 lakh, are among the reasons MSMEs are finding it difficult to recover their dues from large corporates. Even as government departments have started clearing up dues of MSMEs with the Finance Ministry stressing timely clearance of funds, many micro and small firms are stuck with pending payments of more than Rs 3 lakh crore with large firms with no easy legal recourse.

Industry sources said the IBC had empowered many small companies with dues of — say Rs 40-50 lakh — to get their dues cleared by threatening to take bigger companies to NCLT for non-payment. This gave them a negotiating lever in early clearance of their dues, because a company being dragged to National Company Law Tribunal can have adverse ramifications. On March 24, the government decided to raise "the threshold of default under Section 4 of the IBC 2016 to Rs 1 crore" due to emerg-

LARGE CORPORATES ARE BETTER PREPARED

■ The pandemic has led to large corporates being on a much stronger footing financially compared to smaller firms who have lost bargaining power to claim dues, especially since April.

ing financial distress for most companies. While the intention was to provide some breathing space to companies facing distress due to pandemic, it had an unintended effect of slowing down payments by big corporates to smaller firms.

"Even a small company doing a monthly billing of Rs 1 crore usually has pending payments of Rs 30-40 lakh. Now they are stuck. They can request for clearance of dues, stop partial supplies but cannot use the IBC," said KE Raghunathan, convener of the Consortium of MSME associations. The threshold for invoking insolvency could have been raised 10 times to Rs 10 lakh instead of it being raised 100 times to Rs 1 crore, as that would

prevent most frivolous cases being filed under the law, he said. MSMEs used this legal provision as a bargaining tool to get their dues on time and it worked in many cases.

As per a recent Brickwork Ratings study, MSMEs have nearly Rs 3.3 lakh crore of their funds stuck with strong large corporates in form of receivables. "The liquidity crunch being faced by MSMEs is on account of two key issues, including the lack of a funding line from the banking system and stretched working capital because of low bargaining power with large corporates to have payments released," it said.

The pandemic has led to large corporates being on a much stronger footing financially compared to smaller firms who have lost bargaining power to claim dues, especially since April. Reduction in days for which dues are pending would substantially improve liquidity conditions for MSMEs. While banks have started disbursing funds to MSMEs under the 100 per cent Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme announced by the government last month, credit availability remains a challenge for stressed firms.

Till March 2020, 157 corporate insolvency resolution plans were withdrawn under Section 12A of the IBC, of which 64 cases involved amounts less than Rs 1 crore, as per data from the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India. The reasons for early withdrawal of cases were full settlement with the applicant and other settlement with creditors.

"The IBC law is working as a deterrent as many times debtors settle the case on receipt of a notice for repayment. In many cases, we have observed that dues are recovered after an application is filed but before it's admitted by the NCLT bench. Settlement prior to admission of the case is cost effective for both parties and it works well for smaller companies," said a Delhi-based lawyer. Even for banks and financial institutions, IBC has resulted in higher recoveries compared to other platforms.

As a percentage of claims, banks recovered on an average 42.5 per cent of the amount filed through the IBC in 2018-19, against 14.5 per cent through the SARFAESI, 5.3 per cent through Lok Adalats and 3.5 per cent through Debt Recovery Tribunals, as per latest available RBI data.

COVID-19 effect: 'States' GDP to shrink up to 14.3% in FY21'

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

GROSS STATE domestic products (GSDP) of all states are expected to contract 14-14.3 per cent in the current financial year 2020-21, with Goa, Gujarat, Sikkim and Assam expected to record a double-digit contraction in GSDP rate, India Ratings and Research said.

In percentage terms, Goa is expected to record the highest GSDP rate contraction of 14.3 per cent, followed by Gujarat with 12.4 per cent, Sikkim with 10.7 per cent.

States having a higher share of agriculture are expected to have suffered less compared with the ones which have a lower share, the Fitch-group company said in its report. Some sub-sectors, especially in services, such as banking and financial services, IT and IT enabled services, were less impacted because they were able to adjust their operations owing to the high penetration of digital platform in their business operations, thus, having less impact on the states where the share of these services is high, it said.

Bharat Biotech's COVID vaccine 1st in India to get approval for human trials

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

THE COUNTRY'S top drug regulator, Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation, has granted approval to Bharat Biotech India to conduct human clinical trials for 'Covaxin', making it the first indigenous COVID-19 vaccine candidate to receive this approval, the firm said Monday. These trials are scheduled to start across India in July.

Drug Controller General of India Dr V G Somani approved Bharat Biotech's application to conduct phase I and II clinical trials for Covaxin, it stated in a release.

The permission was granted after the company submitted results from pre-clinical studies of the vaccine that demonstrated its safety and immune response, said Bharat Biotech in its release. The vaccine was developed in collaboration with Indian Council of Medical Research's National Institute of Virology.

"The collaboration with ICMR and NIV was instrumental in the development of this vaccine. The proactive support and guidance from CDSCO have enabled ap-

AMID COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Govt to collect data online via mobiles, telephone interviews

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

WITH DATA collection facing challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation is developing an online survey solution for capturing data via mobiles, web-based interface along with telephonic interviews as the new normal for the country's statistical system, MoSPI Secretary and Chief Statistician of India Pravin Srivastava said Monday.

The Ministry has also formalised a loan from the World Bank for improving the data quality at state and national levels, he said, adding that a national integrated portal for all Indian official statistics will be launched soon.

"We have revamped and revised our data collection processes, we are educating our enumerators on how to maintain social distance and still be able to collect data. We are also developing a generalised survey solution, it's going to be branded by the name of E-Sigma, and this will pave the way for more intelligent, more easy data to be captured using mobile devices ... this revolution in data capturing will be supplemented and aug-

mented by telephonic interviews as well as by web-based interfaces ... all these interventions will be the new normal for the Ministry and the entire statistical system where traditional data capturing systems will be facing a lot of challenges in adapting itself to the requirements of the country," Srivastava said while addressing a webinar on National Statistics Day.

The government has not released the retail inflation numbers for April and May citing data collection issues due to the lockdown.

Speaking at the same event, Bibek Debroy, Chairman, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM), said health expenditure needs to be prioritised. "Given the paucity of resources, there has to be a switching of public expenditure, a reprioritisation of public expenditure." Former EAC-PM Chairman C Rangarajan, who was given the lifetime achievement award for statistics, flagged the importance of credible data. "National Statistical Commission was set up to monitor the statistical system for the country, the statutory recognition must come to it as early as possible. I also hope that there is a satisfactory end to the controversies that have recently arisen on data," he said.

'Card transactions decline 67% post-lockdown'

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, JUNE 29

CONSUMER LEVERAGE has declined significantly during the first month of lockdown with card spending declining significantly after lockdown was imposed in the last week of March to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. The total value of credit and debit card transactions has decelerated from Rs 1.51 lakh crore in January 2020 to merely around Rs 50,000 crore in April, according to an SBI report.

Per card transaction has fallen from as high as Rs 12,000 to Rs 3,600 in case of credit cards and from Rs 1,000 to Rs 350 in the case of debit cards. "It could be also possible that consumer spending has shifted from luxury purchases to purchases of daily essentials and groceries," SBI's Ecowrap report said.

"Interestingly, even as credit card spending has significantly declined during April, our estimates of the short-term consumer leverage (presented as sum of credit card, personal loans, advances against FD, shares, bonds outstanding etc) which had reached a peak in FY18 at Rs 1.56 lakh crore declined significantly to Rs 1.29 lakh crore," it said.

BRIEFLY

Another 'operation twist'

Mumbai: The RBI announced another 'operation twist', also known as open market operations, under which it conducts simultaneous sale and purchase of bonds.

HDFC Bank plans fundraise

Mumbai: HDFC Bank said it plans to raise up to Rs 50,000 crore by issuance of unsecured perpetual debt instruments, Tier II capital bonds and long term bonds in the domestic market. **ENS**

₹3.4K cr for 14 projects: CIL

New Delhi: Coal India (CIL) said it has identified 14 additional projects with capital expenditure of over Rs 3,400 crore under the 'first mile connectivity' initiative.

'59 trade curbs in 7 months'

New Delhi: G20 countries imposed 59 trade-restrictive measures during mid-October 2019 and mid-May 2020, WTO said. **PTI**

Ban on PPE export lifted, limit set at 5 mn a month

PRABHARAGHAVAN
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

THE CENTRE Monday partially lifted its ban on exports of personal protective equipment (PPEs), allowing medical textile manufacturers here to ship up to five million units of such equipment to other nations seeking global suppliers amid the ongoing pandemic.

"Boosting Make in India exports, Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) medical coveralls for COVID-19 have been allowed with a

monthly export quota of 50 lakh (five million)," said Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal in a tweet. The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) had first banned exports of PPEs towards the end of January.

Despite a surge in COVID cases here, textile firms have not only managed to fulfill the Centre's demand for over 2.2 crore PPEs, but have excess capacity even after catering to additional demand, said a senior government official.

Full report on www.indianexpress.com

Hospitality sector gears up for a new post-lockdown normal

DIVYAA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

AS HOTELS and resorts gear up to welcome visitors once again after three months of lockdown, staycation, workation and quarantine tourism have become the new buzzwords.

From hotel chains like Trident and Hyatt, to luxury cottages and hillside resorts, everyone is rolling out a slew of confidence-building measures for visitors — including discounts and special packages for long stays, hygiene managers, and tying up with healthcare professionals in case of any eventuality.

"Each of our hotels has a dedicated hygiene and safety man-

Hotels, cottages and resorts are rolling out a slew of measures — including discounts, hygiene managers and special packages for long stays

ager... None of our team members has tested positive for COVID-19", commits Trident Agra on its website, along with offering up to 60 per cent discount on staycations, since moving around in the city and visiting public places/tourist sites is still a big no-no.

Travelling by road — by far, the

only practical option — comes with its own set of ifs and buts. For instance, the booking term at Trident say that if one is travelling from outside Uttar Pradesh, "visitors should preferably be armed with an e-pass and corona negative certificate, so that they don't suffer inconvenience at the border, even as "the hotel only mandates a "safe" status on Aarogya Setu app before check-in".

The Hyatt group, which has 32 hotels in India of which 13 have reopened, is collaborating with medical experts from US-based Cleveland Clinic to fine-tune its re-opening and operating procedures for guests. Besides offering staycation packages to win back consumers, "the hotels are

US FCC chief Ajit Pai and Rjio president Mathew Oommen were speaking at a USIBC webinar

must be wary of vendors which can bring a "digital pandemic".

"Equipment at heart of 5G networks currently comes from just a few global suppliers, and the largest of course right now is the Chinese company Huawei. This has raised concerns given that

reimagining places and spaces to make social distancing not feel that way," says a statement from the group.

Places like Jaipur and Udaipur in Rajasthan, which closed its borders to outsiders last week, are registering a keen interest among locals for staycations. Akhil Anand, director of Tree of Life Resorts, which has properties in both places, says, "Our Jaipur site — located in a village 30 km from the city — registered a 65 per cent occupancy last week, with many from Jaipur planning their first getaway post lockdown." Even the Udaipur resort is witnessing a footfall of local tourists.

Full report on www.indianexpress.com

'5G equipment comes from just a few suppliers ... this has raised concerns'

AASHISH HARYAN
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

FOUR DAYS after US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo praised telecom companies like Reliance Jio Infocomm (Rjio) for turning away Chinese 5G vendors, the Chairman of US Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Ajit Pai and Rjio president Mathew Oommen on Monday said that as companies moved towards deployment of 5G technologies in their respective countries, they

Chinese law requires all companies subject to its jurisdiction to comply with request from the country's intelligence services," Pai said in a webinar organised by US India Business Council (USIBC).

Oommen said there was a need for secure digital transformation to 5G networks, while asking "How do we ensure we do not contaminate digital infrastructure, and make sure that digital pandemic cannot infect digital infrastructure and fabric of any nation?"

Full report on www.indianexpress.com

'Once crude price stabilises ... it will bring stability to domestic market'

New Delhi: Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Monday said the Centre expected domestic fuel prices to stabilise once the global crude price stabilises. Petrol price was hiked by 5 paise per litre to Rs 80.43 a litre, while that of diesel was raised by 13 paise to hit a record high of Rs 80.53 in Delhi on Monday.

"We expect that once the price of crude oil in international market stabilises which is today moving between \$40-\$43 per barrel ... it will bring stability to domestic market," said Pradhan. **ENS**



GOLD

₹49,245



RUPEE

₹75.58



OIL

\$41.76



SILVER

₹49,461

Note: Gold, silver rates at spot market in Delhi; gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; Brent crude as of 2230 IST

Need a law against fixing: ACU chief

BCCI's anti-corruption unit head Ajit Singh says they do not have power to question alleged fixers like Dandiwal

NIHAL KOSHIE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

AN INDIAN man has been identified by the Victoria police in Australia as the central figure and kingpin in a global tennis match-fixing and betting scam. Board of Control for Cricket in India's anti-corruption unit (ACU) head Ajit Singh said on Sunday that the person identified in a *Sydney Morning Herald* report as Ravinder Dandiwal was a 'person of interest'. Singh tells *The Indian Express* how an (ACU) identifies corruptors but why his hands are tied in the absence of a law which criminalises match-fixing. Excerpts:

How do you identify a person of interest?

The basic idea is to keep your eyes and ears open. There are a lot of people who indulge in betting whenever a match is going on. There are people who bet online and there are people who bet at the ground. There are other sources which give you certain information. You have your entire team of participants; the players, the support staff, the management, the ground staff. These people are regularly given education in anti-corruption matters and educated in what the anti-corruption code is and what their responsibilities are. And if they feel there is something suspicious, they report to us. Then we are in constant touch with anti-corruption agencies of other cricket boards and the International Cricket Council. If something comes to their notice, they pass it onto us. There is an exchange of information.

A lot of things come out in the open. Like somebody is starting a private tournament of their own. So, you go into the background of the tournament. Is it a viable tournament? If it is not a viable tournament, why is he organising it? Is it for the love of sports or is there some other reason? And why is a tournament of no consequence being televised? Like there was this Rajputana League in Jaipur. This league (Rajputana) was being televised because they paid the television channel a hefty amount. Once it is televised, your scope for betting goes up manifold.

We are also in touch with certain sports integrity agencies which monitor various trends, plus we also do some social media monitoring.



Sreesanth was accused of spot-fixing in the Indian Premier League.

So, there are many ways in which you get information and you focus on certain people and realise that these are the people involved in it.

So Ravinder Dandiwal (central figure in tennis fixing scam, according to Victoria Police) was a person of interest even before the news was reported in the Australian media?

Yes, we had gone into his background. He wanted to run a league in Mohali which we scuttled. This was about two to three years back. One of the ways (to scuttle) is that if there is a suspect league, we inform the players that this is a suspect league so they are not supposed to participate in it. So once the BCCI players are out, it is more or less gone for the league.

When Dandiwal planned to organise the league in Mohali, was it the first time he came on the radar?

No, he was already a suspect and that is why there were more reasons to look into why he was organising the league. He was supposed to have organised a league in Nepal which was under a cloud. By then, one knew he was a corruptor and this information had come to us. And we passed on the information to the relevant quarters.

Have you been able to crack down on these

In Sreesanth's case, he was discharged because the court said that whatever action could have been taken against him under the existing rules and regulations, the BCCI is taking. Unfortunately, there is no criminal law under which his act can be defined as an offence. 'I have no option but to discharge him'... this is what the judge said."

AJIT SINGH
BCCI ANTI-CORRUPTION UNIT CHIEF

T20 leagues that get matches telecast for the purpose of corrupt activities?

By and large, we have managed to scuttle them. To run a league, you have to build publicity to attract players and you announce prizes. That is when one checks the antecedents of these people.

Dandiwal seems to have moved into tennis, going by what we know so far.

He is a smart operator, in the sense that by and large he is trying to get his operations done outside India. His idea is to make money through fixing. Now whether money comes through cricket or tennis or football or wherever he can manage to make someone, who is a participant, compromise, he will do it.

Currently, how many such persons of interest are on the radar of the BCCI's anti-corruption unit?

Anybody who has come to adverse notice any time is in our database. It is a substantial number. Now the gravity of the person's threat could be different. Somebody who has been into betting could be a part of it or he may not have graduated to higher levels. He may have tried once or twice to get close to a player. And somebody else would have risen in the ranks. We, as an agency, have nothing to do with betting, what we are

concerned about is match-fixing. If betting leads to match-fixing, that is what we (anti-corruption bureau) need to curb. (Tackling) betting is the job of the police. We are in constant interaction with the participants, we hold education classes, we brief them, we also tell them what is the modus operandi of these people. We also show them photographs that these are the guys and 'just in case you spot them, be careful'. We also have our anti-corruption network, our integrity officers etc. And they also keep an eye.

Recently, Steve Richardson (coordinator of investigations, ICC anti-corruption unit) said that making match-fixing a criminal offence would be a game-changer for India? What are your thoughts?

I was also part of the panel for the symposium (online) and so was Richardson. We need a law against fixing. See in Sreesanth's case, he was discharged because the court said that whatever action could have been taken against him under the existing rules and regulations, the BCCI is taking. Unfortunately, there is no criminal law under which his act can be defined as an offence. 'I have no option but to discharge him'... this is what the judge said.

We are a non-enforcement agency, in comparison to say a DRI (Directorate of Revenue Intelligence) which draws its powers through a legal statute. We do not have powers to summon people who are not participants or obtain records or for search and seizure. These powers are with the police and other enforcement agencies. Once they have a law under which they can act, then control over them (bookies/fixers) would be very effective. Right now, we can't do anything to Dandiwal even if we have some information.

If you have information about someone like a Dandiwal, does the anti-corruption unit have powers to question him at least?

No. We don't have the powers to question a person. We can request him (to come for questioning). If he comes, fine, but if he does not, there is little we can do. Also (without a law), police will be able to only question him if he has committed a crime. That is why we say we need a match-fixing law. If the law comes through, it will be of great benefit.

I think the thing to remember is that six months ago no-one even knew what this (coronavirus) was, hadn't heard of it. I've actually had it. I had it at the end of December, beginning of January, and I thought I had a bad case of flu. It's amazing how long it has been around."

IAN BOTHAM

Dobal, popular member of Delhi cricket fraternity, falls prey to pandemic

VISHAL MENON
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29



SANJAY DOBAL, a popular club cricketer known for his affable nature and infectious smile, and who was part of the support staff of the Delhi U-16 team that became national champion in 2012, passed away at the Capital's Venkateshwar Hospital on Monday morning due to Covid-19-related complications.

Dobal, an Air India employee and coach of their cricket team, was on duty at the Terminal 3 of the Indira Gandhi International Airport when he developed fever and fatigue on June 12. The family admitted him to Jeevanjyoti Nursing Home in Bahadurgarh, Haryana, where he also began complaining of breathing problems.

"As his condition began to deteriorate, the nursing home asked us to shift him to a bigger hospital in Delhi with better facilities. So, we admitted him to the Venkateshwar Hospital on June 16. Upon arrival, he was tested for Covid-19, but the results were negative. So he was transferred to the ICU and treated for pneumonia and parainfluenza," Siddanth told *The Indian Express*.

The following week, the hospital conducted another Covid-19 test on Dobal, which also returned negative. "However, when they conducted a third test on June 25, he was declared Covid positive and immediately shifted to the Covid ICU ward," Siddanth said.

When contacted, Dr Raman Sharma, Senior Consultant (internal medicine), the chief medical officer who was treating Dobal, said: "Sanjay Dobal succumbed due to Covid-19-related complications. When he was tested positive three days ago, we began administering him with the US FDA-approved drug Remdesivir and plasma

Dobal, an Air India employee and coach of their cricket team, was on duty at the Terminal 3 of the Indira Gandhi International Airport when he developed fever and fatigue on June 12.

therapy. We were hopeful of a recovery, because he was a sportsman. But since there isn't a proper response protocol for Covid-19 in place, this is the best that we could have done. On Monday morning, when he failed to respond to our treatment, he died of a cardiac arrest."

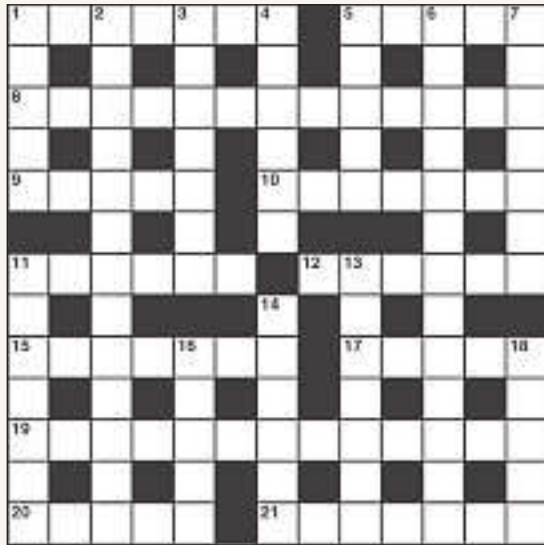
Pall of gloom

An immensely popular figure at the Ferozshah Kotla, Dobal's death brought a pall of gloom in Delhi's cricketing fraternity. Two days ago, former India cricketers Virender Sehwag and Gautam Gambhir took to Twitter, appealing for plasma donors for Dobal. Delhi cricketers remember him as a gentle and affable soul, who was also an ardent Shirdi Sai Baba devotee. By Monday afternoon, as news of Dobal's death trickled in, current and former cricketers offered their condolences.

"Shocked and saddened. Lost an important member of our cricket fraternity today. Sanjay Dobhal *bhai* (53) is no more. There isn't a cricketer in this country who he didn't help...and did it with a smile. Always. Went away too soon...may your soul R.I.P. #Covid_19," tweeted former India opener Aakash Chopra.

Delhi opener Hiten Dalal remembered Dobal's positivity and eagerness to help young and upcoming cricketers. "Sanjay sir was always positive. He emphasised the need to have a steady job even while playing competitive cricket. Sanjay sir would always tell me, '*Air India mein vacancy nikalta hain to batata hoon, job ke liye apply karna*,'" Dalal recalled. "I'm devastated by sir's demise. More than anything, I will miss his smile," he concluded.

CROSSWORD 4157



ACROSS

- Mother serves cream in a decorative form (7)
- Bill's getting a new car; that's capital (5)
- To get on a bus is enough to change lodgings (8,5)
- I have knowledge about something currently seen in France (5)
- Politician for whom no tears are shed (7)
- Sign of a pressing need? (6)
- Released and spread around (6)
- They may have a case for striking (7)
- Newlywed given key to chamber? (5)
- An illegal dispatch (13)
- Concoct a test to discern flavour (5)
- Holds out longer? (7)

DOWN

- Amble around to see a girl (5)
- Players cause titter in class (13)
- Speech might indicate where one's home is (7)
- Hemingway or Sterne perhaps (6)
- Not colourful like the female (5)
- An adverse proposal? (7,6)
- Declared a number was incorrect (7)
- Close agreement (7)
- Show part of a book to a worker (7)
- Earnestly desire praise perhaps (6)
- Hates having to change in a hurry (5)
- Nonplus? (5)

Solutions Crossword 4156: Across: 1 Spray, 8 Compares, 9 Unity, 10 Entrance, 11 Pluck, 12 Um, 16 Uppers, 17 Arnold, 18 Egg, 23 Tiers, 24 Elephant, 25 Gauge, 26 Minister, 27 Deity. Down: 2 Penelope, 3 Articles, 4 Corner, 5 Sport, 6 Drunk, 7 Islet, 12 Use, 13 Nag, 14 Intimate, 15 All right, 19 Gander, 20 Terms, 21 Leant, 22 Whist.

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

Fortune's wheel never stands still. The _____ is therefore the most perilous. - Maria Edgeworth (7,5)

VOILE



HRIST



ILSNPT



ILYGHH

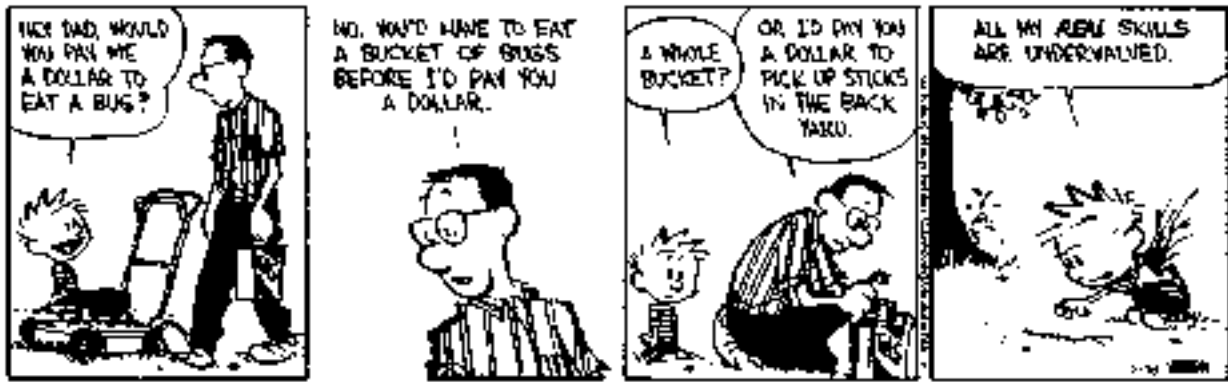


SOLUTION: OLIVE, OLIVE, SHIRT, SPRINT, HIGHLY
 Answer: Fortune's wheel never stands still. The **highest point** is therefore the most perilous. - Maria Edgeworth (7,5)

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



SUDOKU 4155

Difficulty Level 1s

Instructions

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level

1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius



SOLUTION SUDOKU 4154



DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

Yesterday's lunar alignments have left you feeling emotionally winded. However, as luck would have it, this year's version of celestial events offers you all the opportunity you need to get back in the driving seat and, by tomorrow, come out on top.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

There is no reason why everything should be black and white, and you must expect another day when all is not quite clear. The most ideal way to get the very best out of your planetary aspects is to enjoy your dreams and follow your instincts. Wear your sense of humour on your sleeve.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

Although you're renowned as a communicative sort of a person, team-work is not always your major strength. Somehow you now have to find a way of fitting in while at the same time asserting your very individual and totally unique version of what is needed.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

Forget your sensitive, retiring Cancerian qualities. Today it is time to bring out a different feature of your celestial personality, being more ambitious, tough and ruthless. Also, as a matter of urgency, expect the unexpected. You can never be too prepared.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

Venus is happy sailing through your chart, but will soon bring changes to your romantic hopes. Take all opportunities to enjoy yourself, but, bearing in mind the general irresponsibility inherent in today's mighty planetary aspects, you will have to decide where to draw the line.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

Powerful financial indications continue for a little while longer, but in view of the fact that the stars indicate carelessness and loss, you must question all ambiguous claims and suspicious details. Somebody may have misled you, probably without meaning to.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

I am afraid that you will have no choice but to listen to what other people are saying. If you do try to close your eyes or avert your gaze then you will actually provoke them into even louder announcements and proclamations. That doesn't mean that their words will suddenly make sense, though.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

Keep up the hard work! Even if you are taking time off then you should keep active and flexible. If you adopt a narrow and dogmatic course, the ground may be swept from under your feet. Also, if you make a rash promise then a partner might take you at your word.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

If you are in tune with the heavens, then you have managed to extend a period of hope and opportunity. It's almost as if you are enjoying a sort of personal emotional revival. Do not feel bad about enjoying yourself if other people are working, and don't let them put you down or make you feel small.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

The only way to function today is to throw out every prejudice and preconception. This is something at which you excel, in spite of your rather undeserved stuffy astrological reputation. If you start again with a blank slate then you might realise that you misjudged a partner, and that they underestimated you.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

There is much to be done that still seems to concern your long-term future. If you have lost sight of a number of goals, use your current planetary energies wisely to talk to the experts, chat to friends and seek advice from every corner, especially from people who have been here before.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

You could be in a gambling mood. Take emotional risks by all means, and adopt unusual plans if they suit your mood. However, do bear in mind that financial prospects are dodgy, so don't throw good money after bad. Also, listen to loved ones; they could be smarter than you think.